Confessions of a Wife

MARY ADAMS

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"THE SECRETARY WAS READING DUTIFULLY."

Confessions of a Wife

By

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CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

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I

THE night is wild and wet. It makes faces at me when I go to the window, like a big gargoyle; it has the dignity that belongs to ugliness and character. I 'm afraid I was born a heathen for beauty's sake; for all the Christian there is in me — and that is scandalously little — is kept busy going into sackcloth and doing penance for my esthetic sins. I have never loved any person who was not beautiful. But then I have never loved many people — Father, and poor Ina.

The wind starts a long way off to-night, and stirs and strengthens with a terrible deliberation. By the time it reaches you, nothing can withstand it, and you don't care whether anything can or not. I feel as if I could open the window

and let myself drop, sure that it would lift me up and carry me, and I should n't in the least mind where. I dream of doing that often.

To-day I found something which pleased me. It was in that old French book of Father's that I read aloud in to keep up my accent. It was about a princess in a shallop on a river — no, I 'll copy it, rather; it seems to me worth while, which is saying something, for most things do not strike me that way. I wish I knew why.

The princess was a sea-princess, but she lived in an inland country, and when the water-soul within her called, she had only a river wherewith to satisfy it. So she floated out in her shallop upon the river, nor would she let any person guide the shallop, neither her men nor her maidens, but loved the feel of the oar, and the deference of it to her own soft hands. And she chose the hour that precedes and follows the setting of the sun, for it was a fair hour, and the river was comely. And drifting, she thought to row, and rowing, she thought to drift; so, drifting and rowing, she had her will, for no one gainsaid her. And she was a fair princess, though a haughty, and many men crowned her in their hearts, but to none of them did she incline. And certain knights took boats and sought to overtake her upon the river, for she seemed to drift. But when they drew nearer to her, drifting, they perceived that she was rowing, and, row they never so sturdily, she did keep the shallop in advance of them, nor did she concern herself with them, for she was a princess, and she had the sea in her heart, while they were but knights, and contented themselves with the river, having been born

with river-souls, in the river country. And these wearied her, so that she rowed the stronger for her disdain, and escaped them all, though now and then but by a shallop's length.

Now it chanced that there appeared upon the river a new oar, being the oar of a prince who did disguise himself, but could not disguise his stroke; nor did he row like these others, the knights who rowed upon the river for her sake who disdained them, and this the princess, being expert in such matters, perceived. But the prince did not seek to overtake the princess, whereat she marveled; and she glanced backward over the river, and observed him that he rowed not to overtake her, but drifted at the leisure of his heart.

And every day, at the hour which precedes and follows the setting of the sun, the prince drifted at the leisure of his heart. Then did the leisure pass out of the heart of the princess, and she marveled exceedingly, both at herself and at him who did not overtake her. And while she glanced, she drifted. And it befell that on a certain day she glanced, and behold, he was rowing steadily. Then the princess bent to her oars, she being strong and beautiful, and so escaped him like the others, and he saw that she smiled as she escaped. But he rowed mightily, for he was a prince, and he gained upon her. And she perceived that he gained upon her, and it did not suit her to be overtaken, for thus was her nature, and she followed her nature, for she was princess, and it was permitted her. And she smote the water, and turned her shallop swiftly, and disappeared from his sight, and from the sight of all those others whom he had distanced upon the river. And the light fell, and the dusk rose, and they twain, the escaped and the pursuing, the fleeing and the seeking, were alone on that part of the river. For it is not a frequented part of the river. And the prin-

cess hid from him. And she believed him to have passed by unwitting, so she stirred in her shallop to find her oars, but lo! she had lost them. And she was adrift upon the river, and it was dark. Now, while she sat there in perplexity, but mute, for she was royal, she heard the motion of oars, as they had been muffled, and it was not easy to follow the sound thereof, for it was a subtle stroke, although a mighty. And she recognized the stroke, and she remembered that she had lost her oars.

So the prince lifted her into his own shallop, and she, for she was royal, gainsaid him not.

I have translated as I copied, and the mistakes will speak for themselves, as mistakes always do. Of course it is a version of Atalanta,— one of those modern things that copy the antique without a blush,— yet I rather like it. I never had any patience with Atalanta.

I HAVE been pursued all day by a fragment that I cannot mend or join, and I think it must have come from some delicate Sèvres cup or vase, of the quality that breaks because it is so beautiful:

I never know why 't is I love thee so:
I do not think 't is that thine eyes for me
Grow bright as sudden sunshine on the sea.

. . . . . .

It is thy face I see, and it befell
Thou wert, and I was, and I love thee well.

A man wrote that, I 'm sure, but he was different from men; and no woman could have written it, though she were like women. I must ask Father to look it up for me. He is the most accurate quoter I ever knew, and I suppose I have his instinct for quotation, without his accuracy. I hate etiquette, barbed-wire fences, kindergarten cubes, mathematics, politics, law, and dress-coats. I like to wear golf-skirts, and not to give an account of myself, and to run about the grounds in the dark, and to get into a ruby gown before the fire and write like this when I come in. It is one of the nights when March slips into the arms of May, and chills her to the heart. I know two things in this world that never, never tire me and always rest me — I wonder if they always will? One is a sunset, and the other is an open wood fire.

Mr. Herwin has come in, and is reading to Father; the thick ceiling, floor, and carpet break the insistence of his voice, and it blurs into a rhythm, like the sound of waves. I don't altogether like his voice, and it 's more agreeable taken through a medium of fresco and Wilton carpet. Robert Hazelton had a pleasant voice. Poor Rob! But he was too short, and he is very plain.

Oh, that wind! It roars like a fierce, ele-

mental, raging creature that does n't know what it wants, but is destined to have it at any cost. I can't help that feeling that if I opened the window and just let myself out, the storm would be kind to me, and I should be upborne, and swept along safely, over the tops of trees, as I am in my dreams (they are usually elms, and very high, and I wonder why they are cultivated trees, and wish they were pines and live-oaks, but they always remain elms), and I think I should never be carried too high, so as to get frightened, or lost among clouds, and so dashed down. I am sure I should stay, like a captive balloon, at just about that height, within sight of earth and houses and people, but well out of their reach, and floating always, now wildly, now gently, if it stormed or if it calmed, with the cold freedom of the dead and the warm sentience of the living. And I think —

Father is sure not to miss me; the secretary is good for another hour at least. The next best thing to jumping out of the window is to get into the garden. The storm is growing gloriously worse. I believe I 'll go.

I WENT. Golf-skirt and waterproof and rubber boots, wind in the face, rain on the head — I went. Slapped on the cheek, smitten in the

eyes, breath-beaten and storm-shaken, a fighter of the night and of the gale, for the love of storms and for the love of fighting, that was I. I seem to myself to have been a creature of the dark and the weather, sprung of them, as the wet flowers were sprung of the earth, and the falling torrents were born of the clouds. I seem to myself to have been a thousandfold more myself out there. The drawing-room girl in low dresses and trains, receiving beside her father, doing the proper thing, saying what everybody says,— even the girl who likes Strauss waltzes, and dances once in a while till morning,— looked out of the window at this other girl, like distant relatives. The girl in the garden disowned them, and did n't care a raindrop what they thought of her. Oh, I did n't care what anybody thought of me! What 's the sense in being alive if you can't hurl away other people's thoughts and respect your own? I suppose, if it comes to that, it 's well to have your thoughts respectable. Truly, I don't think mine have ever been disreputable. Come, Marna Trent! Out with it! Have they? No — no. I really don't think they have. I can't answer for what they might be, if it stormed hard enough, and I 'd been to too many receptions, and I could n't get into rubber boots and a waterproof and run about gardens.

When you come to think of it, what 's a garden? The walls are stone, and pretty high; there are broken glass bottles all along the top, to keep burglars out and the cat in; James locks the iron gate at eleven; the shrubbery is all trimmed like bushes that have just come from the barber's; there is n't a weed to be seen, and the paths are so narrow that I get my golf-skirt wet. Why, if I were a man, I should be outside, in the clubs, the streets, the theaters,— God knows where,— doing bohemian things, watching people in the slums, going to queer places with policemen, tramping up and down and watching the colored lights on the long bridges, taking tremendous walks out into the country, coming home at any hour, with a latch-key, and wearing a mackintosh — no, I should wear an oil-coat, a *long* oil-coat, and a fisherman's sou'wester, and I should go — I wonder where? and I should do — I wonder what?

But I am a girl; and I stay in the garden. And that 's bad enough, for the other girls don't care about gardens. I heard a woman tell another woman one day that I was "very imprudent." She said I "went out evenings," I laughed then, for I could afford to, and I did n't care what she said. I don't feel so much like laughing now. The worst thing I ever did in my life I 've done to-night within the last half-hour.

I 'm glad that woman does n't know it.

I have n't been outside of my father's garden, either. And you know, Marna Trent, how much you respect your father's garden. In the first place, it 's a garden, and in the next, it 's your father's. I believe the storm-soul got me, as the water-soul took Undine, when nobody expected it.

"*The princess was a sea-princess, but she lived in an inland country*"— poor thing! I always thought I should like to go to school with a princess, and be able to say "Poor thing!" to her, for of course they 're nothing but other girls, only they can't wallow round among wet things in rubber boots and golf-skirts. Who would be a princess if she could be the daughter of an ex-governor, and live in a big, dull suburban place, with a garden seven acres across?

I went out into the garden, I say, and it stormed like the Last Day (I 've always thought it would come in a spring freshet), and nobody saw me, for the servants were n't about, and the secretary was reading "The Life of Rufus Choate" to Father (Father always chooses some of those contemporary things); and I saw the top of Mr. Herwin's head as I crept by the library windows — he has rather a nice head, if his hair were n't too curly. I don't like curly men, but straight ones, like Father. I stood on

tiptoe and peeked in, but I kept a good way off. Father looked very handsome and peaceful and happy in his big leather chair — dear Father! The secretary was reading dutifully. I believe he does it to increase his income while he is studying law, for one day I told him I could n't bear lawyers, and he cultivated a grieved expression, which was not becoming, and I told him so. I never have been able to get on with Mr. Herwin. There 's an Heir-to-the-Throne-in Disguise manner about him which, in my opinion, the circumstances don't justify. I feel like a panther stroked the wrong way every time I see him. It 's two years, now, since he has been around. I should think Father would get tired to death of him, but he says he is "a brilliant young man."

I wonder what he 'd say now? But I don't see that there is any particular need of his knowing; I hate to worry Father. He 's always had the most absurd confidence in me; it 's perfectly irrational, but pretty solid. It 's like the garden wall, with broken bottles on top. Who knows what I should have done without it? I hope I should have drawn the line at eloping with the coachman. An hour ago I had never done anything very special that I would n't be willing to

have my father know. He might have seen any other page in this book; I 'd have given it to him if he asked for it. I wonder if this is the way people feel when they have done some dreadful thing — like one person before the deed and another person after, and not able to convince anybody else that it is n't the same person at all. I feel very strangely, and a little seasick, as if I had just got off a shipwreck.

I went out into the garden, and it stormed as if the skies were breaking up and coming to pieces on the earth, and burying it under — you might think they were ashamed to see it. And the wind had worked its temper into a hurricane, and, oh, but I loved it! I loved it! And I ran around in it, and I stiffened myself and fought against it, and turned and drew my waterproof-hood up, and fled before it; and I don't know which I liked the better, the battle or the flight, for I love everything that such a storm as that can do to you. My waterproof was drenched before I got past the smoke-bush and the big spiræa in the clump by the tree-house, and my golf-skirt was n't short enough: it hit the borders, and they sopped at me like sponges squeezed out. And there was a hole in my rubber boots, and I could feel my feet squash in the wet. And

the wilder it was, and the wetter, the happier I felt. And I began to sing, for nobody could hear me, it raved so out there among the trees. I sang opera and ballads and queer things — all the love-songs I ever knew, and that one I like about the skipper's daughter and the mate:

"... a man might sail to Hell in your companie."
. . . . . .
"Why not to Heaven?" quo' she.

And pop! in the middle of them, something dashed at me, and it was Job. I thought he was shut up in the kitchen, for his feet were wet, and he had a sore throat, and I 'd given him some hot whisky; and I scolded him. But I must say I appreciated it to have him take all that trouble to find me — there 's no flatterer in this world like your own dog. So I picked him up, and put him under my waterproof in one of the dry spots.

"Job," I said, "you know better than this!"

Then the storm lifted up its voice, and spoke, quite distinctly, so close to me that I jumped.

"And so do you," it said.

And there stood a man.

I jumped, but I did not scream — I have so much consolation; but I have n't another atom. He was very wet, but not so wet as I, and he seemed to shed the storm from his mackintosh as

if it had been impudence. He looked exceedingly tall in the dark, and his soft felt hat was crushed down over his face in a disgraceful way. I had never noticed how square his shoulders were.

"Sir," said I, "how did you get here?"

"Why, I followed Job, of course," he said.

"Could you follow him back?" I suggested quite pleasantly.

"Not immediately — no."

"If James should come out by accident — and he might, you know — he would shoot you for a burglar, as surely as you stand here. I don't see," I said — "really, Mr. Herwin, I don't see what you are standing here *for*."

"I will explain to you if you like," answered the secretary. He spoke so steadily, with that Heir-to-the-Throne manner of his, that I found it impossible to endure it, and I said:

"I think you forget what is due to me. You had better go back and read 'Rufus Choate' to my father."

"That is unworthy of you," he answered me very quietly.

Of course I knew it was, and that did n't make me feel any better. I let Job down, for he squirmed so under my waterproof, and insisted on kissing Mr. Herwin, which I thought

very unpleasant of him; so he ran around in his bare feet and sore throat,— I mean Job did,— and if he has pneumonia it will be Mr. Herwin's fault, and I shall never forgive him, never. By this time we had begun to walk up and down, up and down, for it was pretty cold standing still to be rained on so, and we splashed across the garden, fighting the gale and running from it,— first this, then that,— we two, I and a man, just as I had done alone. Job splashed after us, in his insufferably adorable, patient way, only the paths were so narrow that Job had to walk chiefly in the box border, which was wetter than anything.

"You had better go into the house," the secretary began.

"I 'm not ready to go into the house."

"You are getting very wet."

"That 's what I came out for."

"Sometime you 'll do this once too often."

"I have done it once too often, it seems."

"I meant, you risk pneumonia. It is intolerable."

"It is Job who has pneumonia, not I. Pick him up, won't you? Put him under your mackintosh. He must be sopping. Thank you. Why, *thank* you! I really did n't think —"

"Don't you really think that I would do anything whatever that you asked me to?"

"I never gave the subject any consideration, Mr. Herwin."

"Then," he said, wheeling, "consider it now!"

A cataract of rain swept down from the trees over our heads, and drowned the words off his lips. A street light looked over the wall. I could see the broken bottles glisten, and a faint electric pallor flitted over that part of the garden by the tree-house in the Porter apple-tree. Now, the tree-house has a little thatched roof, and it is n't quite so wet in there, though it is only lattice at the sides, and sometimes I go in there when my storms are particularly wet — for nobody would think what a difference there is in storms; some of them are quite dry.

"Come!" said the secretary. And he took hold of my hand as if he had been an iron man. Of course all he meant was to put me into the driest wetness there was till the torrent held up a little; but when I found myself alone in that tree-house in the storm, in the dark, with that man, I could have stabbed him with something, if I had had anything sharp about me. But I had the sense left not to say so.

"I 've always wanted a name for this tree-house," I began; "now I 've got it."

And the man said "Ararat!" before I got the word out. I did n't suppose he was that kind of man. And I began to feel quite comfortable

and to enjoy myself, and it is the scandalous and sacred truth that I began not to want to go in. And at that point, if anybody would believe it, the secretary took it upon himself to make me go in.

The storm had gone babbling down,— it had got past the raving stage,— and he put out his hand to help me down the tree-house steps, but he did n't say anything at all, and I would rather he had said anything. The street light looked over the wall at us, and I felt as if it were a policeman, while I climbed down from Ararat. It is a very unbecoming light. I hope I did n't look as ghastly as he did.

So I said, "You are hoarse, Mr. Herwin. You have taken cold already," just as one says, "Won't you have another lump of sugar?" at an afternoon tea. I admit that my remark was the more exasperating, seeing that the man was as dumb as a stuffed eagle. Then he opened his mouth, and spake:

"You will come in now, Miss Marna, won't you? Your father might be worried."

Now he spoke in quite a proper tone, gently and deferentially, as a man should, and I said yes, I would go in; for I am quite willing to please people when they speak to me properly. So we came in, up the wet paths, between the

box borders, and the rain had stopped. And Mr. Herwin did not talk at all while we went past the spiræa and smoke-bushes, but Job wriggled out from under his mackintosh and kissed him in the most unmitigated way. So we came on, and the library lights fell out on us from the window where I had peeked in; and Father was asleep in his big chair before the fire. And it came over me like that! what a thing I 'd done — prancing about in a dark garden, in a storm, alone in a tree-house with the secretary, and only Job to chaperon me. For I never have done such a thing before in my life. I never did anything I should n't want the servants to know. And I wondered what Father would think. So I pulled up my waterproof-hood over my bare, wet head, to hide the scorching of my cheeks. But the man had the manners not to notice this. He did something much worse, however. He began, in a personally conducted tone that I object to:

"Do you often go out this way in such storms?"

"Always."

"You might get one of those dangerous colds people are having."

"I could n't get cold that way, any more than an English sparrow."

"The next time you do it," said Mr. Herwin, "I shall go, too. In fact," he said, "every time you do it, I shall come out and bring you in."

"Very well," I said; "that would only make it the more interesting."

The secretary looked at me with a kind of proud motion of his head, for he saw that I taunted him. I was sorry by then, and I would have stopped him, but it was too late. Before the library window, in the face of the porch light, in the sight of my father, he told me how he felt to me.

"Oh, what a pity!" I said —

If he had talked that way, if he had looked that way, if I had known he felt that way, out on Ararat, in the dark and wet, I should have said something so insolent to him as no man ever could forgive a woman for, not if she were sorry till she died for having said it. But it was not storming any more. And it seemed different in the light and quiet, and with Father so near. So I answered as I did. What could a girl do more? I 'm sure I was quite civil to the secretary. I can't see any particular reason why he should get up such an expression as he did. And he dropped Job, too, and Job growled at him — there 's positively no limit to that dog's intelligence.

So I said good night, but Mr. Herwin did not answer me. He lifted his hat, and stood bareheaded, and Job and I came, dripping, into the empty hall.

Now we are quite dry and happy. Job is done up in his gray blanket that matches his blue-skye complexion, bundled before the fire. He has had another dose of whisky; I suspect he has got a little too much. I have had a hot bath, and got out of everything and into something, and now my ruby gown — especially the velvet part of it — seems to me to understand me better than anything in the world. The rain has quite stopped, but the wind sings down the chimney. It has that tune in its head, too, and seems to be humming it:

"A man might sail to Hell in your companie."

But it never gets quite through, comes to a pause, falls short of heaven, and spoils the sense.

Father is still asleep in the library. Maggie has come and gone for the night. The house is preposterously still. Mr. Herwin did not come in again. I did n't know but he would.

"My dear Mr. Herwin: I hope I was not uncivil to you the other evening. I was really

very wet and cross. I did not mean to be ugly, you know, but I 'm liable to break out that way. It 's a kind of attack I have at times: I growl, like Job. I hope you quite understand that I esteem you very highly, and that I am always ready to be your friend, although I cannot be what you ask.

"Most sincerely yours,
"MARNA TRENT."

"DEAR MR. HERWIN: I fail to see why I should be snapped up in this way, as if I had been in the habit of forcing an unwelcome correspondence upon you. I must call your attention to the fact that you never received a note from me before, and this, I beg you to observe, is the last with which you will be annoyed. I did not suppose my friendship was a matter of so little consequence to people. For my own part, I think friendship is much nicer than other things. According to my experience, that is the great point on which men and women differ. I am, sir,

"Very truly yours,
"M. TRENT."

There are people so constituted that they must express themselves at any proper or improper

cost, and I 'm afraid I 'm one of them. I admire the large reserve, the elemental silence that one reads about, in what I call the deaf-mute heroes and heroines; but I can't imitate it, and whether I 'm above or beneath it, I perceive that I have n't the perception to know.

There are four ways in which a woman can relieve her mind, if she does n't lavish her heart: a mother, a girl friend, a lover, or a book will serve her. None of these four outlets is open to me. Ina! Poor Ina! You sweet, dead, only girl I ever truly cared for! Sometimes I wonder if my mother's lovely ghost is a little jealous of you, because I can't remember her to love her as I loved you. Pray tell her, Dear, if you get a chance in that wide world of yours and hers, that I have never thought about her in all my life as much as I have this spring. She seems to float before me and about me, in the air, wherever I go or stir.

A good many people have told me that I ought to be a writer, which only shows the massive ignorance of the average human mind. It sometimes seems to me as if I must carry "Rejected, with thanks" written all over me, I have explored that subject so thoroughly. I am told that there are persons who have got manuscripts back seventeen times, and have become famous

at the eighteenth trial trip; but my pluck gave out at four experiences with prose and two with poetry, and I am done with a literary career for this world.

There is a fifth method of self-preservation. You can become your own author, publisher, printer, binder, reader, critic, and public; and a common blank-book, with a padlock if you choose, is competent to carry your soul and the secrets thereof, if you have any, or to convince you that you have some, if you have n't, which is substantially the same thing. I call mine "The Accepted Manuscript."

It is a week to-night since I added anything to the Accepted Manuscript, and I 've nothing but copies of a couple of humiliating notes to fill the gap. Since that evening when I went out into the tree-house in the storm, the secretary has not seen fit to speak to me at all. If I meet him at the door, he lifts his hat, and if I go into the library while he is reading to Father, he lifts his eyes, and their expression is positively exasperating. I never denied that Mr. Herwin was a handsome man, and melancholy becomes him, I 'm bound to admit. But he has that remote air, as if I had been caught stabbing him, and nobody knew it but himself and me, and he would n't tell of me, lest I be held up to human

execration; it is a manner quite peculiar to Mr. Herwin. I don't pretend to know how the man does it, but he contrives to make me feel as if I had committed high treason, as if I had got entangled in a political plot against my own nature.

I wish Father would dismiss him and get another secretary.

I told him so yesterday, for I got a chance when we met in the hall, and I was going out to drive in my dove-colored cloth, trying to open my chiffon sunshade that stuck. He opened it for me — he is quite a gentleman, even when I don't choose to be quite a lady, and I will own that no invariable lady ought to have said what I said to the secretary. And the aggravating thing about it was that the secretary laughed — he laughed outright, as if I had amused him more than I could be expected to understand. He had the sunshade in his hand, and he held it over my head, and he said: "What pretty nonsense!" But he looked at the white silk and chiffon, with the sun shining through it. I was n't quite clear what he meant. I 'm not accustomed to have my sunshades called nonsense, or my language either. I never heard of a governor's secretary before who was impertinent to the governor's daughter. I can't see that Senator Herwin's having been an honest person, and dying poor,

accounts for it. I have been told that Mrs. Herwin was a Southern beauty, the extravagant kind, and that she led her husband a life. I never saw her, but I 'm sure the secretary resembles his mother. He looks remarkably handsome when he is insolent.

"My dear Mr. Herwin: I have spent twenty-four hours trying to decide whether to put your note into the fire, return it unanswered, or show it to my father. It is really unpleasant to receive such things. You put one in such a brutal light! As if it were a girl's fault because a man liked her. I don't wish to be ill-mannered; I 'd rather be barbarous: but you compel me to say, sir, that I disapprove of your persistence altogether. Pray, do you think I am the kind of woman who can be browbeaten into loving people? Perhaps you take me for the other sort that waits to be coaxed. Learn that I am neither.

"But believe me to be,

"Sincerely yours,

"Marna Trent.

"P.S. I told you that I esteemed you and would be your friend. You refused my friendship, and now you wonder that I decline your

love. It seems to me that a man ought to be satisfied with what he can get, and not make such large demands that nobody can possibly meet them. If I were a man, and loved a woman as much as all that, I would — well, I would do quite differently."

"DEAR MR. HERWIN: Certainly not. Why *should* I tell you what I would do if I were a man? I cannot see that the circumstances call for it. Very truly,

"M. T."

"MY DEAR SIR: Your last note is disagreeable to me. I must beg you to forego any further correspondence with me on this subject. It is one on which it is, and will be forever, impossible for us to agree. M. TRENT."

"MY DEAR MR. HERWIN: The world is so full of women! I read the other day that there are forty millions in this country. I think if you really would exert yourself, you might manage to love some other one of them. And then you and I would both be quite happy. You are not a dull man (I grant you that), but you don't seem to understand my point in the least. It is not that I have a highly developed aversion to

you. It is that I do not wish to love any man — not *any* man. Pray consider this as final. You can be so agreeable when you are not troublesome.

"MARNA TRENT."

"DEAR FRIEND: Now you are quite reasonable and possible. I never had any objections to your *friendship;* it was you who objected to mine. Since you are willing to meet me on that basis at last, I find you interesting and valuable to me; and I am perfectly willing to write to you in this way once in a while, since you wish it, though I prefer to mail anything I may feel like saying to your address. I was sorry the day I left a note in the second volume of 'Rufus Choate,' and I would rather you did not send things by Maggie. There 's something about it I don't just like. I never allowed my heroine to do it in the novel I wrote. You never knew I wrote a novel, did you? I never told anybody before. It is because we are friends that I tell you. That is my idea of a friend — somebody you can say things to. I am mistaken in you if you ask me why I never published it. That 's one thing I like about you — you are not stupid. You are one of the people who understand; and there are not enough of them to go round, you know. I never knew but one person who understood —

that was my girl friend, Ina. She died. Sometimes I think she died because she understood too much — everything and everybody. People wasted their hearts on her; they told her everything, and went bankrupt in confidence as soon as they came near her.

"Job and I are sitting in the library, and Father has gone to bed. You have been gone half an hour. The June-beetles are butting their heads against the screens on account of the lights, and Job barks and bounces at them every time they hit. The moths are out there, too, clinging to the wire netting, and flying about stealthily — beautiful little beings, some of them, transparent as spirits, and as indifferent to fate as men and women. How joyously they court death! To look at them one would think it quite a privilege.

"I found the roses when you left, and the poems, out in the hall on the hat-tree. You are very thoughtful and kind, and, to tell the truth, I don't mind being remembered. I have never read much of Edwin Arnold. I shall begin with the long one about Radha and Krishna. I have turned the leaves a little. I must say I don't think Krishna was in the least worthy of a girl like that. Why did she waste herself on such a fellow?

"So you liked my shade hat with the May-flowers? That is very nice of you. The disadvantage about a man friend is that his education in millinery is defective, as a rule. I was quite pleased that you knew it was a May-flower. Father asked me if they were hollyhocks, and I told him no, they were peonies.

"Faithfully your friend,

"MARNA TRENT.

"P.S. I forgot to say yes, thank you; I will drive with you on Sunday, if you wish."

"OH, now you have spoiled it all! How could you, how *could* you begin all over again, and be disagreeable? Do you suppose I would have walked in the garden with you, by moonlight, by *June* moonlight, if I had n't trusted you? I don't trust people over again when they shake my trust, either, not if I can help it. That is one of my peculiarities. I have attacks of lunacy,— idiocy, if you will,— but I swing back, and come to my senses, and look at things with a kind of composure which I don't wonder that you did not count on. I don't think it is characteristic of girls, as girls go, and I know that it is not considered admirable or lovable by men. But I cannot help that, and I don't want to help

it, which is more. I prefer to swing back and keep the balance of power.

"Sir, you did wrong to make love to me again, when I had trusted you to make friendship. No, I shall be quite unable to play golf with you on Saturday, and I shall not be at home on Sunday afternoon. I am going out to the cemetery to put some flowers on Ina's grave. And on Monday Father has invited an old friend of ours, Dr. Robert Hazelton, to dinner, so I shall be preëngaged all that evening, while you are reading to Father, and probably much later. And on Tuesday I am going to a dance at the Curtises'. There is one thing I am convinced of: it is the greatest mistake, both in life and in literature, to suppose that love is the difficult, the complicated thing. It is not love, it is friendship, which is the great problem of civilized society. The other is quite elemental beside it.

"M. T."

June the thirteenth.

If I loved Mr. Herwin, of course I would not, in fact I perceive that I could not, make him so miserable. I think he is the handsomest man, when he is unhappy, whom I ever knew in my life. I like to be quite just to people. He has the bewildering beauty of a pagan god (I mean,

of course, one of the good-looking gods), but he has the exasperating sensitiveness of a modern man. And then, he has the terrible persistence of a savage. I think he would have been capable of dashing whole tribes to war for a woman, and carrying her off on his shoulder, bound hand and foot, to his own country, and whether she loved him or hated him would n't have mattered so much — he would have got the woman. It must be very uncomfortable to be born with such a frightful will.

But I do not love him. I have *told* him that I do not love him. I have told him till I should think he would be ashamed to hear it again. But it seems only to make him worse and worse. He has a kind of sublimated insolence such as I never met in any other person, and when I scorn him for it, I find that I admire him for it — which is despicable in me, of course, and I know it perfectly.

He had the arrogance to tell me to-day in so many words that I did n't understand myself. He said — but I will not write what he said. The Accepted Manuscript rejects the quotation. — Oh, if I could talk with Ina! My poor Ina! — If I could only put my head on my mother's lap a minute! It seems to me a lonely girl is the loneliest being in all the world.

June the fourteenth.

I PUT the date down. I put it down precisely, and drive it into my memory like the nail that Jael drove into living flesh and bone and brain. Now that I have done it, I wonder that I am not as dead as Sisera.

I have told a person to-night — I, being sane and in my right mind, competent to sign a will, or serve as a witness, or be treasurer of a charity bazaar — I, Marna Trent, have told a person that I —

How long ago was it? Forty-five minutes, by my watch. We were in the drawing-room, for Father had two governors and three senators to dinner, and he had them prisoners in the library, and the secretary was let off. So Job was lying on the flounce of my white swiss with the May-flowers embroidered on it, and the lights were a little low on account of the June-beetles, and there was a moon, and our long lace curtain drifted in and out, and blew against me, and I got twisted in it like a veil.

And the secretary said — Then I said — He looked like that savage I wrote about — the one that flung all the tribes into war. If he had picked me up and jumped over the garden wall with me, I should n't have been surprised in the least. The terrible thing is that I should n't

have much cared if he had. For the man did look as glorious as a deity. But he had the divine originality to tell me that I loved him.

And the veriest squaw in the latest great and gory North American historical novel could n't have acted worse than I did.

For I said I did.

As soon as the words were out of me, I could have killed myself. And when I saw the expression on his face, I could have killed him (that is, I could have if, say, it had been the fashion of my tribe). There never was a civilized woman who had more of the "forest primeval" in her than I, and never one who was less suspected of it. I am thought to be quite a proper person, like other well-bred girls; and the curious thing is that the savage in me never breaks out in improper ways, but only smolders, and sharpens knives, and thinks things, and hums war-cries under its breath — and carries chiffon sunshades, and wears twelve-button gloves and satin slippers or embroidered Mayflowers all the while. And nothing could prove it so well as the fact that my hand and my brain are writing this sentence, putting words together decently and in order, while I have fled into a pathless place and hidden from myself. If he were here this minute, searching my soul with

his splendid eyes, that man could never find me. I cannot find myself. There is no trail.

All I know is that I got straight up, and went out of the drawing-room, and left him alone. Any school-girl might have done as silly a thing. I can't say that I take any particular comfort in the recollection of the fact. But I am convinced I should do it again under the same circumstances.

For the lace curtain blew so, and fell over my head and face, and I stood up to push it away, and he sprang to his feet, and his arms — and I dipped under them, as if we had been playing that game that children call "Open the gates to let the king come in" — and so I whirled about, and swung out, and I found I was free, and I ran.

He has n't gone yet. It is perfectly still in the drawing-room. That is his cigar on the piazza. I wonder what he 's waiting for?

I PUT my head out of the window just now to ask him, for it is very tiresome up here, and cigar-smoke makes me nervous. So I leaned out a little way, and I said:

"What are you waiting for, Mr. Herwin?"

"You."

"You 'll wait a good while, then."

"Oh, no, I sha'n't."

"Sir, I find you insufferable."

"Dear, I find you adorable."

"Mr. Herwin, go home. I am not coming down."

"Marna, come down. I am not going home."

"Then you will spend the night on the piazza. What are you waiting for, anyway?"

"To take something."

"Call James. He has the keys of the wine-cellar."

"Are *you* going to be insufferable?"

"Well, I 'd rather be anything than adorable."

"But, you see, you can't help yourself."

"You 'll find I can. . . . What is it you are waiting to take, Mr. Herwin?"

"One of my rights."

"You have no rights, sir."

"Oh, yes, I have. . . . Marna, come down!"

"I might, if you spoke to me properly."

"Won't you come down — please?"

"I am sorry to disappoint you. But I do not please." And then I shut the window down. But it is a pretty warm night, and I could n't stand it as long as I thought I could. So I opened the window after a while, as softly as a moonbeam sliding around the edges of a leaf. I did n't think anybody could hear me. That

man has the ears of an intelligent Cherokee. But I shall not write down what he said. The Accepted Manuscript declines the publication of such language. So I answered, for I had to say something:

"Where is Job, Mr. Herwin?"

"On my lap."

"I must say I don't think much of his taste. What is he doing?"

"Kissing me."

"Oh, good gracious!" . . .

So I shut the window down again, and I locked it, too. Pretty soon Job came up to my door and cried, and I let him in. But I did n't go down. And I did n't open the window. And there is n't air enough in this room to fill the lungs of a moth. And Job's tongue hangs out of his mouth like a long, pink ribbon, he pants so. It is ten o'clock.

It is half-past ten. I have opened the window far enough to tuck my silver hand-glass under —the little one. By the pronounced absence of nicotine from the atmosphere, I infer that the secretary has given up a bad argument and gone home.— I wonder, by the way, what kind of home he has? It never occurred to me to wonder, before. Some sort of chambers, I sup-

pose, among a lot of bachelors. I should think he must be quite comfortable and happy.

The governors and the senators have gone, too. I have kissed Father good night, and sent Maggie away, for I could n't bear the sight of her to-night, and had hard work not to tell her so. And now Job and I are locked in. Job is asleep in his basket bed by the window; and when the June-beetles hit on the screen, he growls in his dreams, for there never was anybody so intelligent as Job; but when the moths come, they are so beautiful and so stealthy, he does not growl. As I write, they whirl and flit, and retreat and advance, and yield and persist, like half-embodied souls entangled in some eternal game. That invisible barrier between them and delight and death seems to tantalize them beyond endurance.

It is eleven o'clock.

It is half-past eleven. I have n't begun to undress. I think there never was anything worse than the weather to-night. I cannot get breath enough to think. Job squirms about in his basket, and sits up and begs like a china dog in a country grocery. I think he wants a walk. I believe I 'll slip out into the garden with him; I 've done it before, as late as this. The moon

is as bright as an army with banners. There is something martial and terrible about it — it seems to move right over one, as if it had orders to prepare for a vast battle of the elements. I believe there 'll be a tremendous easterly storm to-morrow. I always know before the weather bureau does when an easterly is on the way. Perhaps I may come to my senses out in the garden.

It is twelve o'clock — it is, to be precise, half-past twelve o'clock.

I did come to my senses out in the garden — or I lost them forever, and the terrible thing is that I cannot tell which.

For Job and I went out into the garden, and the world was as white as death, and as warm as life, and we plunged into the night as if we plunged into a bath of warmth and whiteness — and I ran faster than Job. The yellow June lilies are out, and the purple fleurs-de-lis; the white climber is in blossom on the tree-house, and the other roses — oh, the roses! There was such a scent of everything in one — a lily-honey-iris-rose perfume — that I felt drowned in it, as if I had been one flower trying to become another, or doomed to become others still. It was as quiet as paradise. I ran up the steps to

Ararat, and Job stayed below to paw a toad. The little white rose followed me all over the lattice, and seemed to creep after me; it has a golden heart, and such a scent as I cannot describe; it is the kind of sweetness that makes you not want to talk about it. The electric light in the street was out, for this suburb, being of an economical turn of mind, never competes with the moon. There was moon enough — oh, there was enough, I think, for the whole world! For, when that happened which did happen, it seemed to me as if the whole world were looking at me.

As I sat, quite by myself, in Ararat, behind the vines, all flecked with leaf-shadows and flower-shadows (and thinking how pretty shadows are on white dresses and on bare hands and a little bit of your arm), I heard Job's tail hit the foot of the tree-house steps. And as I looked, it began to wag in the most unpardonable manner. Then I knew what had happened, and my heart leaped in my body like a live creature that had been caught in a trap. My lips moved, but they were as dry as a dead, red maple-leaf; my words refused me, and there could n't have been a rose in the garden as red as my cheeks, for I felt as if I could have died of fear and joy, and of shame because I felt joy. There is something

terrible about joy. It does n't seem to mind any of the other emotions.

"Do not be frightened," he said quite gently. "It is only I."

It was only he. It was only the only person in the world who *could* have frightened me, out there in Ararat in my father's garden, at more than half-past eleven by the June moon.

He came up the tree-house steps, tramping steadily, and he made no more apology for his behavior than the moon did, or the west wind, which, by now, had begun to stir and rise.

"You intrude, Mr. Herwin," I said. "Since you do, I must go into the house."

"Presently," he said serenely. But I looked up into his eyes, and I saw that he was not serene. And he stood between me and the tree-house steps. And I said:

"Let me pass, sir!"

"In a minute, Marna."

"Let me pass this minute!"

"My beautiful!"

"You presume, Mr. Herwin, and take a liberty."

"Perhaps I do. I beg your pardon. Go into the house, if you will."

He stepped back. I moved to go down the tree-house steps, but I tripped over something—

it was Job; for Job had forgotten his toad, and he had come up into Ararat, wiggling and waggling at the secretary, and he took my dress in his teeth to shake it the way he does, and that tripped me, and I fell.

I should have gone clear down the tree-house steps, the whole length, but he caught me. And when he had caught me he did not let me go.

"I will not *take* it," he said, between his teeth. And he went as white as the moon. "You shall give it to me."

"I will never give it to you!" I cried.

"What if I held you here until you did?"

"I should hate and abhor you."

"You could n't hate me."

"When you speak like that, I despise you."

"No, you don't; you love me."

"I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Herwin."

"I wish you to be my wife, Miss Trent."

"I must decline the honor, sir."

"But I decline the declination. . . . You love me!"

"Do you think it is proper — keeping a girl out here at midnight, this way?"

"We will make it proper. We will tell the whole world to-morrow morning. I will wake your father up and tell him now, if you say so."

"I don't say anything — not *any*thing, you understand."

"You have said everything, Dear," he answered in another tone, and he spoke so reverently and so solemnly that my spirit died within me, and I felt, suddenly and strangely, less like a girl in love than like a girl at prayer. And the tears came to me, I don't know why, from some depth in me that I had never known or felt in all my life; and they began to roll down my cheeks, and I trembled, for I was more afraid of my own tears than I was of him, or of his love.

"God forgive me!" he said. "What have I done? I have made you cry!" And he took my face between his hands.

Oh, Mother, Mother! My dead Mother! The man took my face between his hands, and he kissed me on the lips.— Mother, Mother, *Mother!*

It is two o'clock. I cannot sleep. I am sitting up straight here in my night-dress. I think I shall never sleep again. The night grows cruelly bright and brighter all the time. I wish the moon could be put out. I feel as if my eyelids had been burned off, as if my eyes would never feel any softness or darkness again. I wonder if there are people in the world who would not

feel as unhappy if they had committed a great sin as I feel about that kiss?

The music over at the Curtises' has but just stopped. Somebody has been serenading one of the Curtis girls — a college crowd, I think. They sang a thing I do not know. But the German words came over quite distinctly:

Er hat mich geküsst.

My cheeks blaze till they smart and ache. I feel as if the whole world knew. I feel as if the climbing rose told, and the iris, the June lilies, and even the poor gray toad that Job tormented; as if every sweet, loving, gracious thing and every little, common, unpopular thing in nature conspired against me; and as if the moon sided with them, and the warm west wind drove them on.

And the moths — now I have it! It was the moths. They who delight in dying, and die of delight — they would be the first to tell of me. They would see me led to delight and death, and not be sorry for me at all. Nobody would be sorry for me.

Er hat mich geküsst.

And yet I do not wish or mean to marry this man — nor any man; no, not any man. That is my nature.

Why has not my nature as much claim to recognition as his nature? I can't see that he has a monopoly in natures. In that Indian poem which he sent me were some words. They keep close behind my thoughts, as close as Job keeps to my shadow:

> Thy heart has entered: let thy feet go too.
> Give him the drink of amrit from thy lips.

But Radha was quite a dignified person. Nobody took any liberties with *her*. Krishna was bad enough, but he did not steal. That a man should kiss you when you do not mean to be his wife — it is a dreadful thing. I can't think of anything worse that could happen to a girl. He has made me so unhappy that I never want to see his face again.

I think I really shall ask Father to dismiss the secretary.

II

June the twenty-fifth.

WHERE shall I find a name for the thing which has befallen me? It seems to me as if there were no name for it in earth or heaven. If I call it joy, I shrink away from the word; and if I call it altogether fear, I know that I do it a wrong: but if I call it hope, I find that my fear pulls my hope down, as the drowning pulls down his rescuer.

Yet I cannot deny that I am happy. I would if I could, for I certainly am not comfortable. Write it down, Marna Trent—fling it into black and white, and let it stare you out of your sane senses. See! How do you like the looks of it?

You have promised a man that you would be his wife. *You have promised — a —* MAN *— that you would be his wife.*

I have been trying to recall the exact language: whether I did n't say that I would be his employer's daughter, or possibly his considerate friend, or even his dearest enemy, or almost

anything that might be mentioned, except that one dreadful thing. I am afraid I did say "wife." No; now I think of it, it was he who said that. All I said was "Yes," and, on the whole, sometime, perhaps, I would; and all I did was not to turn him out of the room after I had said it. That is n't strictly true, either. It was n't quite all I did. As for him, he did so many things that I don't dare to think of them, because, if I do, the Wilderness Girl in me comes up, and I feel as if I could call out my whole tribe and have them kill him on the spot — I do indeed.

But the perfectly ridiculous thing about that is that if I saw so much as a woodpecker nipping at him, I should kill the woodpecker! And if I saw anybody really trying to do him any harm, all the tomahawks of colonial history would have to hit me first. I think I should feel a positive ecstasy in a tomahawk that was meant for him.

This seems to me a pitiable state of mind for a girl to be in. I don't respect it; really, I don't. There 's a part of me that stands off and looks on at myself, and keeps quite collected and sane, and says, "What a lunatic that girl is!" But the Wilderness Girl does n't mind the other girl a bit, and this is what mortifies me so.

I don't think I will write any more to-night. I 'm ashamed to. I don't know what I might say. I 'm afraid the Accepted Manuscript would reject me altogether if I should once let myself go and offer it any such copy as comes pouring upon this paper, hot and fast, like the drops of my heart's blood. I 'll shut the book and go to bed.

An hour later.

I CAN'T do it. I 've got as far as my hair and my slippers — and my white gown (for it is such a warm night, and no moon, just that sultry darkness which smothers the breath out of you, soul and body) — the gown with elbow-sleeves and the Valenciennes yoke. It is rather pretty. Nobody ever sees me in it but Maggie; only once in a while when Father rings, and I run down in a hurry. Maggie thinks it is becoming; but Father asked me if I did n't take cold in it. I 've always been fond of this gown. Sometimes I wish the sleeves were longer.

Now I think of it, I must have been out of my right mind. I shall have to write and tell him so. I wonder if it was n't a sunstroke? I was out at noon, in the garden, rather long to-day. They say people do such queer things after sun-

strokes. Job had something like a sunstroke, I 'm convinced. It was trying to find Job that I got into the sun. He was up in the tree-house, and it was hotter than anything; and he only shook hands, he was so weak, and did n't kiss me at all.

I DON'T see, in the least, why Mr. Herwin should have felt called upon to make up for Job's omission.

I HAD to give him sherbet, and put cracked ice on the back of his neck — I mean Job's neck. Job is much better. He is snoring in his basket, with his four feet up in the air. I shingled him to-day. He has kept his winter flannels on too long, the poor dear thing. I 'm afraid I have neglected Job lately. I mean to devote myself to him exclusively hereafter.

MR. HERWIN'S hair does curl beautifully, and it is so much softer than one would have thought.

Two hours later.

IT is well on toward morning. I wish I had been born one of those people who sleep when things happen. I am writing on and on, in this perfectly preposterous way. I am likely to

drown myself in seaweed and shells, because I am afraid to wade in and dare the ocean.

Plunge, Marna Trent! Admit it once for all. You love this man so much — so much — there is nothing you will not think, or feel, or do, or be, for his dear sake. You will even be his wife, because he wishes it. And what is there more than that a girl *could* do for a man's sake?

Why do you have to write your soul, I wonder? Other people don't. They talk it, or they keep it to themselves and don't express it at all. Sometimes I suspect that is the best thing to do with souls — lock them up. But I have n't got that kind. Mine is a jack-in-the-box, and is always pushing the lid and jumping up. Well, if you 've got to write, stop writing to yourself, and write to him, then. Sit down here, in your pretty lace gown, alone in your own room, at two o'clock in the morning, and tell this man whose wife you have promised to be how you feel about him now, at the very beginning of everything. I don't believe you could do a better thing. Come to think of it, he might rather like it, on the whole.

"My dear Mr. Herwin: It occurs to me that a note from me, under the circumstances,

might be agreeable to you. But now that I am trying to write it, I am not sure that I have begun it just right. I will send this as it stands, and try again. Faithfully yours,

"MARNA TRENT."

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I am not sleeping very well to-night,— I 've been anxious about Job, on account of his sunstroke,— and so I thought I would write a line to you, and put it in the first volume of 'Rufus Choate' to-morrow. It is very strange, but now I feel quite willing to put notes in 'Rufus Choate,' and I sha'n't be troubled if you send things by Maggie.

"Your affectionate

"MARNA TRENT."

"DEAR, what have we done? Oh, what have we done? Why did you make me love you? I was quite happy before. All my days rose and set in peaceful easts and wests — gray and rose and sunlight colors. Now I am caught up into a stormy sky, dashed with scarlet and purple and fire, and swept along,— I don't know where, I don't know why,— carried away from myself, as I used to dream that I should be if I let myself out of the window, and did not fall, but were taken up by the wind, and borne to the

tops of the elms — never any higher, so as to be dangerous, but whirled along over the heads of people, out of everybody's reach.

"Now we are swept along together, you and I, and I am out of everybody's reach but yours. And now that I and my dream are one, I am afraid of my dream; and I am afraid of you. Why did you love me? Why did you make me, why did you let me, love you? For you did — you know you did: you made me do it. I did n't want to love you. Have n't I entreated you, by every look and word and tone these ten weeks past, not to make me love you? My heart has been a beggar at your feet all the spring and summer, praying to you not to *let* me love you. You know it has. You are not a stupid man. You knew I did n't mean to love you, Dana Herwin; or, if you did n't know it, then I take it back, and you are a stupid man, and you deserve to be told so. Of course you know I had to be decent and friendly, and I did n't keep out of your way altogether. How could I? If I had n't been friendly with you, that would have been telling. Nothing gives away the secret of a girl's heart quicker than that — not to dare to be friends with a man. She might as well propose to him and done with it, I think. Of course I had to treat you prettily.

"But I did n't want to love you this way— not *this* way. I did n't want to marry you. I never *thought* of such a dreadful thing! And I wish you to understand, sir, that it is very disagreeable to me to think of it now. I will be honest with you at the beginning of everything. If a woman is honest with herself and her love, she must be honest with the man she loves. And I tell you, sir,— for it is the truth, and I 've got to tell you,— if I could unlove you I would do it this minute, and stand by the consequences. I believe I 'll try. If you don't have any more notes from me, you will know I have succeeded.

"Yours, M. T."

The light fell, and the dusk rose, and they twain, the escaped and the pursuing, the fleeing and the seeking, were alone on that part of the river. For it is not a frequented part of the river. And the princess hid from him.

"I AM sorry if it does n't please you that I send notes without beginnings. I 've tried a good many different ones, but they do not suit me. Perhaps it is because I don't quite see ends. How solemn a thing is a beginning without an end! A love that is never to have an end seems to me more sacred to think of than a life that is to have no end; because you can live

without loving, but you can't love without living, and the moment life and love become one — that is a terrible moment. I wrote long ago, in something I have that nobody sees, that joy is terrible. But you don't seem to think so, and that is what perplexes me.

"I remember a book my mother gave me when I was a little girl — I keep it now with my Bible. It is called 'A Story Without an End,' and is one of those old-time allegories about the human soul. A Child who was always spelled with a big C lived in a hut in a forest, alone with the birds and the butterflies, the flowers and the animals, and a little looking-glass covered with cobwebs in which he tried to see himself. And the bluebells were taller than the Child, and delighted me. There was a chapter on Faith, and one on Aspiration, and one on Love; and it seemed to me I understood the chapter stories about Faith, and even about Aspiration, but the one about Love I could not understand, and it troubled me. I seemed to sit down before it as the Child sat under the bluebells that were taller than himself — with his chin in his hands — this way. I 'll show you next time we are in the drawing-room together. That is, if you won't disturb me; for I tell you at the beginning, I can't bear to have

my chin touched. If you ever do that, I shall know that you wish to quarrel with me badly. You are quite mistaken that I have a dimple there. Nobody else ever told me so. My dimple is in my left cheek. I consider it a kind of embezzlement to create dimples where they don't exist, and much worse to make them an excuse for doing things.

"Sir, you kissed my chin yesterday, when I had asked you not to. This is the reason I am writing you without beginnings. The bluebells are taller than I to-day, and you must leave me alone with them in my forest. I shall stay there till you have learned not to — Why do you do things I ask you not to? I don't love you for it — truly I don't. I suppose some women would. But when a man chooses a Wilderness Girl, he must not expect her to be precisely like all the other girls, and, in my opinion, he should treat her accordingly. No, I am not ready yet to wear rings for people. When I am, I 'll let you know. Nor I don't care what stone it is, as long as it is n't a diamond. I don't know how much I love you,— I admit that,—and I want you to understand that you don't know, either. Perhaps it is not so very much; who knows? Perhaps a little more than that—I can't say. But I do know

that I could not vulgarize my love for you — whether it be little, or much, or less — by making myself prisoner to a commonplace solitaire.

"Why need I be a prisoner at all? I 'm sure I can love you quite as much without rings.

"Lovingly and loyally,

"Yours,

"MARNA."

"I THINK, on the whole, if I 'd *got* to wear any, I 'd like it to be a ruby; a small ruby, deep at the heart, and fed by an aorta of blazing color that you must take a little on trust, but get glimpses of once in a while, if you know how to treat the ruby and handle it just right. Of course it must be a carmine ruby — not one of those magenta things. I am not at all prepared for any kind of rubies yet. Really, you must not bother me and hurry me so. It makes me a little fretful. I shall run off into my forest if I am hurried, and then *no* man can find me — not even you, sir.

"This evening you annoyed me. I think once when you come, and once when you go, is enough. I do, indeed."

"DEAR, you were very considerate and gentle with me to-day, and I love you. I *do* love you.

If you will like it, if it will make you happy, I will wear your ring. You may put it on to-morrow evening. For truly I do wish to make you happy. MARNA.

"P.S. Be patient with me. I know I make you a great deal of trouble, but indeed, indeed, I cannot help it. It is my nature, I 'm afraid. But what *is* nature? It seems to me a trackless place; a great tropical jungle where it is easy to get lost on foot, or a vast space of ether where it is possible to get lost on wings. After all, I am rather young, though I don't feel as if I were, — no motherless girl does, I think, — and I don't always know the difference between my feet and my wings. All I know is that I love you. And a ruby is love incarnate. Bind me to you with your ruby, my dear Love! Then I cannot get away if I would, and perhaps — who knows? — perhaps I would not if I could, for I am, and God knows I want to be,

"Your MARNA."

"MOTHER? My dear dead Mother out somewhere in the wide summer night, I write a note to you. Did any girl ever write a letter to her dead mother before? Oh, I don't know, but, Mother, I *must!* I am such a lonely girl! I

have nobody to speak to — I cannot talk to the girls I know, and there is n't any older woman who has ever shown a mother-heart to me that I could care for, to turn to now. Mother, don't forget me in your grand heaven! I never needed you so much when I was a little crying baby on your heart,— a little black-faced baby holding its breath till it almost died because it could n't get what it wanted, the way they tell me I used to do,— I never needed you so much when I wore pink socks and little crocheted sacks, as I do to-day. I wonder if you remember about the socks and the sacks, up there in your great silence? Have the angels driven baby-clothes out of your heart? I don't believe it! Because I remember how much you *littled* me, before you died — I don't see many mothers like you in these grown-up days. Once, when you had been to Montreal with Father, and I had that typhoid fever and so nearly died, and you came home, and got to my bed without anybody's telling me, and I thought it was the strange nurse, but something fell on my face, hot, fast,— drop after drop, splashing down,— I thought: 'Nurses don't cry over little girl patients,' and I looked, and they were my mother's tears, and it was my mother's face.

"Sacred mother's tears! Flow for me to-day.

My mother's face! Lean down to mine a little, out of heaven, if you can.

"Kiss me, Mother — if they will let you. I have told him I would wear his ruby ring."

So the princess, for she was royal, gainsaid him not.

"My dear Mr. Herwin: I have worn it five hours. I cannot stand it another minute. It seems to cut into my finger, and to eat my flesh like fire. I feel as if I were led, a prisoner. It seems to me like handcuffs. I don't like it at all; I really don't.

"I have taken it off, and, you see, it fell on the floor. It has rolled away under the bureau. Job has gone to try to find it. Probably he thinks it is a collar. I 'm sure I should n't blame him if he did. It strikes me, I must say, very much in that same light.

"Pray don't feel at all hurt if I return it to you to-morrow. You won't, will you? Really, I don't wish to be rude, or to hurt your feelings. If I supposed it possible that you could try to understand — but men are born so dull. I don't know why. I think God found his finest nature unemployed on the making of Adam, and so poor Eve was sacrificed to its expression.

"I don't mean anything profane, either. Truly, I think only the Being who created her can possibly understand how a woman feels.

"Shall I send you back the ruby?

"Your troubled

"WILDERNESS GIRL.

"P.S. Job has found the ring. He made a ball of it, and rolled it all over the floor, before I could stop him. Then he took it and shook it, and dropped it in his bowl of water — the wine-colored glass finger-bowl that I keep in my room for him. So it is quite clean, and not hurt a bit.

"P.P.S. It is a wonderful ruby. I admire your taste in selecting it, even if I cannot wear your ring. I don't think I ever saw a finer. It has a heart as deep as life and as shy as love; and the color is something so exquisite that I could look at it all night."

Tuesday evening.

"DEAR, I am sorry. I was wrong and foolish, like a pouting child. And I will wear it, after all. When you took my ringless hand so gently, and looked at it so sadly, and laid it down without a word, I could have curled myself against your heart, and put my arms about you, and

lifted my lips to you of my own free will. No; I know I did n't. But I punish myself by telling you what I feel like doing, if that is any comfort to you. I never saw you look so glorious in my life. If ever I should marry you, sir, I shall spoil you, for I shall let you know what a handsome man you are. There 's something about your hair — and the pose of your head. And your eyes are like a revolving light in a lighthouse, I think: they darken and blaze, and then I miss a revolution, and they blaze and darken. I sometimes wish I could see your mouth. The other way of getting acquainted with it does not seem quite judicial. Of course a dark mustache becomes you, but still it is a little like a mask or a domino, after all, is n't it? Once in a while it comes over me — like that! What kind of man is in his mouth? All I know to-night is that he is a man dear to me; so dear that when I am with him I cannot let him know how dear he is, and when I am away from him I cannot do anything but write him notes to try to tell him.

"That last of yours (by Maggie) was a lovely letter. I suppose it is what people call a love-letter. I wish I could send you anything like that. It took my breath away. I felt smothered. But I cannot write like that. No. My heart

steps back and waits for yours. I should like you to write me on and on like that forever, and I should like to answer you always far beyond you, always stepping back a little — waiting for you, on forever, till you overtook me.

"Perhaps, if I had my way, you never *should* overtake me. I grant you that. But it is just possible I might not be let to have my way; and I recognize that, too.

"If you come into the tree-house to-morrow evening, after Father is done with you, there will be a moon — and Job — and perhaps a girl. And you may put the ring where it belongs.

"For I am

"Your penitent

"MARNA.

"P.S. That is, if I don't change my mind by that time. I warn you, I 'm capable of it.

"P.P.S. Job is too jealous for anything. He positively sulks when I mention you by name. I don't suppose you noticed how he growled when you kissed my chin that evening. I am glad you don't do it lately, for I think he might snap at you and hurt you. He does n't look formidable, I own, but that is the very kind that does the most harm — in men and dogs."

"THOU dearest! It was Eden in the tree-house. And I wear thy ruby ring.

"Thy

"MARNA.

"P.S. Did you ever dream of such a moon in the wildest and dearest dream you ever had? I never did. It swam in a new heaven; and we — we were in a new earth; and every flower in the garden needed a new name. My heart was a Child (with a big C) sitting at the feet of the garden, as (you said) your love knelt down at mine. Every flower was taller than I — the haughty fleur-de-lis, and the tender white roses, and even the modest pansies, and the little, plain candytuft, that looks like daily life and pleasant duty — they all seemed to tower above me, like the flowers of a strange country of which I did not know the botany. Love, I think, is flora without a botany. You cannot name a feeling, and classify it, when you love. It would escape you, and you,

> too late,
> Under its solemn fillet see the scorn.

I could not speak, out in the tree-house, as you did. My lips trembled too much. And when yours touched them, they did but tremble more.

I was afraid I should cry — truly I was — all the time.

"Alas! you are a man, and you cannot understand what I mean. But the ruby understands. That is the nature of a ruby: it knows everything about love, and something about a woman.

"MARNA, Prisoner."

"MY DEAR JAILER: I heard a story to-day. Senator Gray told it at lunch, and I meant to tell you it this evening, but, somehow, I did n't.

"A young medical student loved a girl, and became betrothed to her. (I like that word 'betrothal,' as I told you. Father knew a great poet, once, who announced to his friends 'the betrothal of my daughter.' Nobody ever spoke of that girl as 'engaged' after that!) So my medical student loved a girl, and — no, on consideration, *he* became engaged.

"You and I, if you please, are betrothed. But I am sure the fine and stately word would blush to own that man, though he loved the girl, after his fashion, and she was a sweet, womanly girl — I know about the family. And so he went abroad to finish his studies on the Continent. There he dissected and experimented, and went through the modern laboratories, and came

out of them and back to his own land, and went to see the girl.

"And when she asked him what was the matter, and why he was so changed, and what gave his eyes that new, cold look, he said:

"'In all my studies I have not found love. I have dissected and experimented, and been through the laboratories. I have searched, and I do not find anything that can be called love. I have dissected a great many brains and hearts, and I have drawn conclusions. I have come across some points in toxicology, and I have reason to believe I am on the track of a new method of antisepsis — but I have not discovered love. I am beginning to think that there is no such thing. It cannot be proved. My scalpel has never touched it. My microscope has never seen it. I am forced to the conclusion that it does not exist. It cannot be proved.'

"'Very well,' said the girl; 'if you cannot prove the existence of love, I can.'

"'Prove it to me!' cried the young man, anxiously, for he really liked the girl. 'I shall be under obligations to you if you can convince me of the existence of love.'

"'You will excuse me,' said the girl. 'Good-by.' So they shook hands, and he went

back to his physiological laboratories, where he is experimenting and dissecting to this day.

"But the girl took a Sunday-school class and joined the Associated Charities.

"I thought you would enjoy that story. Dear, I thought I loved you when you said you liked my looks by the moonlight, in my Mayflower dress. But I love you more now than I did then.

"It is the most curious thing — the moment I am away from you I want to sit right down and write a note to you. I am glad you feel the same way. I have quite a pile of them, all locked up, because Job chews them so. He seems to know they are yours, and takes the most violent aversion to them. One night he tore that one to pieces — do you remember? — the one I told you I did n't just exactly like. I don't mean, of course, that it was n't quite a right letter. One reason I like you so much is because you are such a gentleman. But, somehow, it made me feel as if I wanted to go and show it to my mother, and she is dead, and I could n't do it. Job bit that note all up, so I had to burn it; there was n't a legible word left in it. Perhaps I am a little bit of a Puritan, as you say. But I can't help it. I am born

that way. I like to be loved finely — if you know what I mean; and perhaps I like to be loved quietly. I think you must know, because nobody can be finer than you, or more quiet, either, when you feel like it. Sometimes I think there are two of you, and the other one is strong and masterful, and rides over things and people and feelings, and has its own way at any cost. Forgive me, Dear; perhaps I should not say these things. But you know there are two of me also, and one girl stands off and judges the other girl — and sometimes looks on at you as if you were not mine, but belonged to some other woman. I don't think I am as fond of a masterful man, not just of his mere masterfulness, as most girls are. It does n't seem to confuse me, or make me see things differently. If we were up in a captive balloon together, over the tops of the elms, in an easterly storm, and you said, 'Come! We will free the balloon and ride on the storm,' I suppose there are girls who would put their arms about your neck and say, 'Yes, if you wish it, we will ride on the storm.' But I should probably say:

"'Dana, let 's keep our heads and go down.'

"Then, if you were good and went down, and we came home safely — and I should be a little faint, and all tired out (for I think I should),

and you carried me into the house, and I saw how noble you were, and strong, and grand, I should—oh, my dear! I would make it up to you.

"Once you told me I was cold—to you. I was sorry. But I did n't say anything. I only wished you had understood. I think I am writing this note to try to make you understand.

"Your

"MARNA, Betrothed."

"*Bar Harbor, July the twenty-fifth.*

"MY DEAR AND DISTANT: Now, for the first time in my life, I know what distance means. I thought I knew, of course. The curious thing about inexperience is that it does not recognize its master in experience; perhaps, if it did, it would cease to *be* inexperience. That reminds me that you told me once that I spelled love with a small *l* instead of with a large one like most women, and that you should never be satisfied with mine until you had taught me to read it with a capital L, and another word with a capital M. I think you said it was the very essence of loving, in a woman, to spell her feeling properly—and that, as long as she did not, she was still half unwon. I wonder how you happen to think you know what is the essence of loving in a woman?

"At least, I have got so far as this: I don't know but I am beginning to spell Love with a capital L. For it is the dreadful truth, Dana Herwin, that I miss you — I really do. I should not have thought that I would at all; I mean, not like this — not to be uncomfortable, you know, and to come so near being unhappy that you cease to be happy. I think — do you want to know what I think? And I feel — but you are not to know what I feel. In the morning, when I wake, I turn and look at the sea, between Mrs. Gray's pretty curtains (they are white and sheer, with green seaweed over them), and I say: 'All that ocean and land are between us: sixteen hours of it by boat, and over ten by train.' In the evening, when the rest are canoeing, or chatting on piazzas, I like to get by myself. I make all sorts of excuses to be alone — which is not natural to me, I 'd have you understand, for, though I am a Wilderness Girl, I am a clannish girl; I like my tribe, and I don't mope. And, when I am alone, there is the most humiliating monotony in my thoughts. First it is your hair — I see the way it curls; I look at all the straight-haired men I meet, and wonder what kinds of women love them. Then your eyes — I see your eyes flashing and darkening, like that revolving light I spoke of, and missing a revolution, and dark-

ening again before they blaze. Then I try to make out how your mouth looks without me — but I never see your mouth. Do you think I should love you as much if you shaved? Let me believe that I should love you more! Then your voice — but somehow your voice escapes me; and with it a part of you escapes me, too. I am a little confused when it comes to your voice. I only seem to get it reading 'Rufus Choate' to Father. Dear Father! I know you are good to him, for he has the most unreasonable habit of missing me; it is quite confirmed, and that is why I make so few trips. Thanks to him, I never can be called a visiting young lady.

"But he took a notion about my coming to Senator Gray's. He said I looked — I think it was 'transparent' — some preposterous word. I suppose it comes of my feeling strange and changed — exhilarated all the time. Yet that seems too low a word. Call it exalted, rather. There 's been a good deal written by poets and other uncomfortable people that I begin to understand, while yet I know that I do not comprehend it. Now, the way they have of classifying Love (with a capital, please observe, sir) as if it were to be found at a first-class vintner's — that perplexes me; for me it does not intoxicate.

And if you are disappointed, I am sorry. But perhaps I am what Goethe called a Nature; if I am, you will accept my Nature as you do everything about me, faults and all, and not complain? You are generous and noble to me, Dana! I never knew how many faults I had until it befell me that I wished to be a very superior girl for your sake. I never felt so sorry and ashamed of them as I have since I began to wish my soul a perfect ruby,— like this of yours I wear,— deep, deep down, pure fire, and flawless. I wonder do you like my tourmalin? You never said very much about it (and I could not, somehow, ask you). I know it is a reserved stone, not talking much. It seemed to me shy, like a betrothed girl's heart; a stone that waits for something, and has the beauty of that which is unexpressed, although quite understood.

"I think I meant to say something quite different a page back. I will look and see. Yes, it was about wines. I suspect I was a little afraid to say it, and so strayed off to jewels, a less fluent subject. My pen has stiffened up on it.

"Ah, yes, now I know; it was about the difference between exhilaration and exaltation — which seems to me the difference between different kinds of Love. And I believe I began to say:

If Love *is* a wine, it is a communion wine,— to me,— and I taste it on my knees.

"For I am, Sacredly,

"YOUR MARNA."

"THOU strongest! What a ruby is thy love for me! My letters seem paler than tourmalins beside yours. And yet — and yet I am not sure: I think they love you more than they show; but not more than I hoped you would see without the showing. Try to see! Try to understand

"Your

"WILDERNESS GIRL IN CHAINS."

"MY DEAR BOY: I have just got Father's letter agreeing to the West Sanchester plan. He says you have closed the lease of the Dowe Cottage for him for August and September. He asks me if I would like to have him invite you there for two weeks to stay with us. I am writing him by this mail. I said I would try to put up with it.

"Mr. Herwin, will you be my father's guest and mine, and the ocean's, for half the month of August, at Sanchester?

"I hope we shall not quarrel. We never were under the same roof for twenty-four hours.

Who knows? I think it is preposterous, the way I continue to miss you.

"I am Your loving

"LONELINESS."

"DANA dear, I 'm coming home. Really, I cannot stand it another day. Don't flatter yourself, for I am convinced that I flatter you all that you can bear without spoiling.

"Mrs. Gray has been talking to me. She says more marriages are ruined by a woman's spoiling a man than there are by a man's neglecting a woman. I told her I failed to see how either event was at all possible. She said, 'My dear, you are like your mother.'

"Half the Wilderness Girl seems to be blotted out of me by separation from you. I have missed you too much. If I surprise you by being too civilized, after all, where shall we end? Our betrothal would become a tame and commonplace affair, and I know better than you do how much that would disappoint you.

"You write me such love-letters as I think no woman ever had. I am ashamed of my poor, pale things beside them. But, Dear, yours *hush* me — like your lips on mine. And perhaps it is because I feel so much that I can say so little.

"Your own MARNA.

"P.S. Job is gladder than anything to be coming home. I told him we were going, and he has sat upon my trunk and begged ever since. Job totally disapproves of Bar Harbor. It 'combines so much' wretchedness for him that I quite pity him. He never went on a visit before, and is n't at all accustomed to leash life. He has chewed up five beautiful skye ribbon leashes since we came. They are about all he eats, and he has grown quite thin. Then, Mrs. Gray is one of the dogless people, and although she invited him, she is not accustomed to skye terriers sleeping in her guest-rooms. I brought on his basket, but I saw at once it would have to stand in the sewing-room nights. I was so thankful it was n't the stable that I was quite reconciled. But Job never has been. The first night he howled till 2 A.M., and — don't you ever tell! — I had to go and sneak him into my own bed to keep him still. He curled in my neck and sobbed like a terrified baby. But the next night he only cried till twelve, and since then he has been a *perfect* guest. Nobody ever knew he bit the Secretary of War on the heel because he danced with me once. And out of a gallantry which, I admit, was rather fine in him, the Secretary of War never told. He is a widower, you know, and has been visiting Mr. Gray.

And Mr. Gray thought it was the cat who carried the rat into the waste-paper basket in the library, and buried it in philanthropic petitions.

"P.P.S. The Secretary of War wished me to send you his congratulations. But he did suggest that I ask you whether you were an advocate of vivisection, or expected to become so after marriage.

"Job won't let him come within twenty feet of me. And by to-morrow evening I shall be — how near to you? We will begin with twenty feet, sir; and then — we 'll see —

"Your foolish, too joyous

"MARNA."

August the second.

I HAVE always said I would not come to Sanchester unless I could have the Dowe Cottage, and here we are. I have loved and envied it all my life; it is the one perfect situation on the East Shore. I don't care a wild rose for any of the other places about here. I wonder how many strangers visiting the Cape have seen this house from the cars, and said, "Now, if I could have that!"

The house is well enough, but it is n't the house that I care for; it is the dream of shore

and sea that goes with it. The water is broken into gentleness by the shape of the cove; it does not rave, but sighs; the curve of the beach is as delicate as a lady's lip; there is the something too bewitching not to be elusive about the shapes of the rocks and the foreground of old fishermen and their old dories pushing off, and the nets; it all seems to assume difference each time that you look; and there is a weir here this summer. It is going to be so beautiful that I perceive it will turn my head. I waked at sunrise to-day and ran to my window, and sat there for an hour, drowned in the daybreak, drunken with beauty. There is rose-color in my room, and sky-color in the guest-room, and pearl tint in the little room between where I am to put Maggie, and all the rest of the cottage is green and white, or white and green, absolutely nothing else. It makes the house seem like one wave, tossed, I think, into foam, except just here, up where I am, and the foam has the colors of sunrise and sunset — like that wave beyond the weir, living and dying like a rainbow as I write.

I am so happy that I am afraid. It is as if I were a wave — alive and strong this minute, but sure to be broken and spent the next. Happiness is a tide: it carries you only a little way at a time; but you have covered a vast

space before you know that you are moving at all.

I cannot think who wrote those lines that I have always liked:

> By the law of the land and the ocean,
> I summon the tide eternal
> To flow for you and me. . . .
> When shall the flood-tide be?

I wonder if misery is like this, too — a great ebb; the going out slowly of joy, wave by wave, till half the sea is emptied and all the shore is dry. Or is it one shock and cataclysm of nature, plunging over you at a crash — the tidal wave of experience? It is hard for me to-day to believe that I can ever be unhappy; or, indeed, that any other young, live, loving girl in the world can be. I am so happy that I find I cannot do anything at all but sing or pray; but I should not tell any person that, not even Dana. I don't think he would understand. When I sing, my song is half a prayer, and if I prayed, my prayer would be something like a song. It makes a strange medley — may the Lord forgive me! and I think He will.

> Our Father who art in Heaven—
> "Why not to Heaven?" quo' she.

Dana will be here in an hour. The 6:20 train is just leaving town. He has been delayed by his first law case. Job and I must dress at once, and go to the station to meet him. I think I shall wear my white India; he seems to like it. And then any of Job's ribbons will go with it. I shall take the chiffon sunshade — the one he called "such pretty nonsense." I have the most preposterous affection for that sunshade. There 's one thing that perplexes me, and as long as he will never, never see the Accepted Manuscript, I may as well say what it is just now and here. There was once a Wilderness Girl I knew. What has become of her? Where shall I turn to find her? Whither has she fled from me? Is she melting out on the tide, wave by wave? Shall I lose her altogether in the sea?

1 A.M.

I DON'T know why I cannot sleep, for I am very happy. Perhaps it is because I am so happy, or perhaps it is being happy in so new a way that keeps me staring out here at the sea, with the gas low, and the curtains streaming straight out from the window in the strong southeasterly, the way they do nights at the seaside and never anywhere else. They fill like sails, and the room seems a ship. I write a little by the dim light,

— for I don't feel like turning it up,— and then I stare a little, and then I write a little more.

Maggie, in her gray room, is sleeping stoutly. And beyond, in the sky-blue, sea-blue guest-room — I wonder if he is asleep, too? To be together in the same house, so near each other, is a strange and solemn thing.

Father said to-night: "You are as thoughtful of me as a son."

Father is very fond of him. And I — I love him so much that I begin to be afraid of him. I wish he were not quite so superb to look at. Sometimes I wish he were just a plain man, so that I could stand off and get an impression of him that would have a certain value. He dazzles me. We all have our own forms of paganism, and worship them in secret, being but half Christianized for their sakes. I think I have said before that my paganism is omnipotent beauty.

. . . Thou glorious! Here alone in my rose-colored room, nothing but this white paper being witness, my soul turns to thee as if thou wert a god upon a cloud. To thee I swerve. Something within me cries, "Worship!" I struggle to keep my feet.

Stay you the rather at mine. When you kneeled to me this evening, I battled with myself, that you should not know how I longed to

stretch down my hands and lift you up and drop before you. You called me all the goddess names. And I, an adoring girl, accepted them.

Now Nature avenges herself upon me, here alone, with this mute white paper, in the sacred night; and I write, for you do not know it, and *because you shall never know it* — I write you a note which you are never to see.

"*My Love: I am yours utterly.*

"*Marna.*"

"My dear Dana: It seems quite out of the course of nature not to write a letter to you every day. I am too much in the habit of it to stop too suddenly. So I send this line by Maggie. I am a little tired this morning,— I did not sleep very well, for Job sniffed all about the room for mice, and upset his pink finger-bowl on some slippers and things of mine; he is n't at home yet in the Dowe Cottage,— and, if you don't mind, I won't see you till luncheon. Father will need you in a thousand ways, and you might call on the Curtis girls, if time hangs heavily. I 'm sure Minnie Curtis will be glad to see you. She always was. And I shall get downstairs by degrees, perhaps by half-past twelve.

"Yours affectionately,

"Marna."

It is a week since he came to the Wave. (That is what we have agreed to call this house.) I used to think I knew what it was to be happy. Now I see that I had not studied the grammar of joy. Dana says:

"You have not learned the alphabet yet. You play truant too often."

"Why don't you keep me in school, then?" I said. "That is your business."

He made me no answer at all, and that is what makes me uncomfortable. When he speaks I know the worst. But when he only looks at me, I am afraid of him and of what is coming. He has a terrible way of biding his time. I never know when he is done with a subject.

There is something that never was on sea or land about these days. I seem afloat, all the time, between the ocean and the sky; and if my feet touch the earth, they spurn it, as if they had wings, and I go whirling off and up. Now I am a creature of the air; height is my element; flight is the condition of being, and I flee. Then I am flung down swiftly, and find myself a creature of the sea; the deeps are my home; to be engulfed is the condition of being, and I drown. There are moments when I am tossed and driven blindly, and traverse vast spaces of the under-sea, visit sunken wrecks, float

past buried treasure; and then I am hurled up and back, and thrown panting on the shore. Then I perceive that I am a weed upon a wave, and whithersoever the wave wills, there am I borne, and because I am a weed I do not buffet the wave, but love it, and it driveth me, for it is a wave.

But I do not show these things that I perceive to him.

For the princess hid from him.

Of flying or drowning we do not speak together. And he calls me a truant of the heart. What paradise is betrothal! I would be his promised wife forever. I do not think that Adam and Eve in Eden were married for a long time. And if they had never been married at all, Paradise would have been eternal. There can be no doubt of that.

August the twelfth.

A TERRIBLE thing has happened. Paradise is lost. So soon, too soon, I am exiled from *my* Eden; and each soul's Eden is its own. We may exchange tastes, habits, characters even, in this world: our Edens are untransferable; and an angel with a frowning smile stands guard at the gates of mine, already, to bar me out. That frowning smile is the nature of a man. Dana wishes me to marry him the first of October.

August the thirteenth.

I SAID he had not done with the subject — that day he looked at me and did not talk; but I did not expect anything so formidable as this.

He has had an uncle die — that is the short of it; he went away for two days to the funeral. When he came back he brought a piece of dismal news and this preposterous proposition. It seems that this uncle must needs go and leave him all the money he had. I don't fancy it is much — I would n't ask. But, whatever it is, Dana feels at liberty to marry on it. With what there is of Mother's settled on me we should have enough without depending on Father, it seems; and Dana thinks I ought to love him enough to be willing to live somehow, if not as I am used to living — and so on. I did not tell him that I would be willing to live *anyhow* — I don't think that at all necessary. I did not say how little I think about money, and things like that: he knows. I did not say that I could starve and be quite happy. I said that I did not wish to be married.

August the fourteenth.

HE says that does not make any difference. He says it has nothing to do with the subject.

August the fifteenth.

I HAVE told him that if he wants to be married in October he must find some other girl to marry him. We have had our first quarrel. He is hurt and unhappy, and has gone to town. I cannot see why I need feel called upon to miss him quite so much — not so preposterously. I should not mind if I missed him only to a reasonable extent. He has telephoned that he is not coming out to-night. James answered the telephone. I was out watching Job catch grasshoppers, an exhilarating, not to say exalted, occupation. It was wet, too, and I came in too soppy and moppy for anything. There is a fog to-day. It wipes out the world as if it were a vast sponge. Happiness, I think, is only a little white writing on a slate: it looks as if it would last forever, but it is only chalk; the first touch expunges it. My slate is gone suddenly blank and black.

Two of our old fishermen are putting out in their old dories from the beach. They melt into the fog like thoughts. There! they are gone out utterly. They are so old that I cannot even wonder how they feel. Age seems to me like a mighty mist into which people dip and vanish slowly, and between them and the sympathy of youth an unfathomable fog shuts in. I stand

before the mist of years. What does it hold for or withhold from me? Dana and I seem like frail boats, feeling our way into a dim destiny. My love stretches beyond his longing, a mysterious sea. Shall I ever be old — and he? And will love mature as far as life does? If it did not, if it does not, better that it be and remain forever young, a mist-ideal in a blur of morning light.

Two hours later.

Into the record of these admirable and doubtless noble sentiments a sound cut sharply. It was Job barking the one particular individual bark which he reserves, out of the variety of his nature, for Dana Herwin — a chromatic bark of modulated love and jealousy, of welcome and of distrust. I ran down. He stood in the green-and-white hall. No person besides ourselves was there. When he touched me,— for he took me to his heart as if he never meant to let me go,— Job growled, and then he cried like a hurt child, and crawled under the sofa and sobbed. I never knew anybody sob like Job.

And Mr. Herwin did not say a word about marrying in October. I think he has forgotten all about it. I am quite happy.

"My dear Dana: But I thought you had got over that. How can, how *can* you bring it all up again? Yes, I know I was very happy last evening, and I did n't much mind your knowing it. So I said, and so I did, as you say. But that did not mean that I am ready to be your *wife*. It is so hard for a man to understand a woman — it is so hard for you to understand me — that I do not think I ought ever to be your wife at all. I am convinced we should make each other very unhappy. As to marrying you in October, pray regard that point as irrevocably settled. I cannot consider the question for a moment. All the battle blood of my tribe is surging behind me, and I am

"Your
"Wilderness Girl."

"Oh, I love you — yes. I have said it. I cannot unsay it. I cannot unlove, and that is the pitiful part of it. But I do not wish to be your wife in October. You would carry no willing captive to your wedding-day."

"I never knew a person with such a relentless will. I should think, if you loved me as you profess to do, you would have some compassion on me."

"HAVE it your own way, then, if you must. Now you have got Father on your side I am perfectly discouraged. I am worn out with this conflict. I don't care whether I marry you this year or next, or in October, or in April, or now, or never. I am tired out. I am tired of the whole subject. I wish you to understand that I yield out of sheer exhaustion.

"Take me up, fling me over your shoulder, carry me away to your own tribe, then, if you insist upon it — and start all the elements of my nature that are incomprehensible to you into war."

"MY DEAR DANA: Oh, I don't care what you give me. Why should you give me anything at all? That seems to me a foolish custom. I will not be a bride fettered with pearls and diamonds, and flaunting her chains before gods and men. I will have nothing from you but my wedding-ring. I suppose I can't decently refuse that. I think I have told you before — I don't care when. If it has got to be at all, one time is as good as another."

"YES, oh, yes; I don't care. The last week of September is no worse than the first week of October, that I can see. You and Father must

arrange it between you. Really, I don't care to be bothered with these details.

"The only thing I insist on is that you shall find some suitable person to stay with Father, if you are going to turn him out of 'his own hired house' (as Longfellow used to call it) and send him back home alone, and keep me here without him. I warn you frankly: if you find me vanished any evening, you need not be surprised. As it looks to me now, the station is abnormally convenient, and, in fact, if I did n't *know* that I *could* melt away from you any time, I do not think, in fact I am quite sure, I could not possibly make up my mind to stay alone in the Dowe Cottage with you.

"Who ever invented the word 'honeymoon'? Some man, I am sure. *He* never tasted myrrh in it. There is nothing in this world I find it so hard to understand as the nature of a man. The mysteries of sin, suffering, and immortality are quite frank and open beside it.

"I am sorry if you are disappointed that I do not write love-letters to you in these days. Pray, what did you expect? I am dumb, and thou didst it. MARNA."

"*September the third.*

"MY DEAR DANA: Certainly we shall be glad to see you whenever you come out. I quite

think it best that you should be somewhere else, and rather come out, than stay out, just now. Probably we shall see enough of each other after the twentieth. Yours,

"MARNA TRENT.

"P.S. Oh, forgive me! I do not mean to be cruel. I do not *feel* cruel. It seems to me as if *you* were the cruel one of us two. It would have been so easy to go on as we were, betrothed and blessed. We could have lived so for a long, long time, and been quite happy. I cannot see why you were not contented. I was. Paradise 'was paradise enow' for me."

September the twelfth.

I HAVE not seen Dana for a week. I suppose it was rather uncivil of me, but I wrote him not to come. I find it impossible to entertain him in these days. He seems to me like company. Father and Job and I are happier by ourselves. I must admit it is celestial weather. The ocean blinds me and the breakers deafen me. There always is something about September sunshine, but *this* September sunshine has the divine nature. It is working an awful miracle. I dare not think of it! Yet, in truth, I think of nothing else.

"*September the fourteenth.*

"To Ina in Heaven: Ina! Ina! Here we come to the parting of the ways between spirit and flesh; girl ghost and live wife, how can we stay together, or be ever to each other what we were? You — you would have been my bridesmaid, Dear; you would have worn, I think, a robin's-egg-blue silk mull. How dainty you would have been! I am not to have any bridesmaid, Ina. No one shall take your place. I don't care for any wedding; it is all to be by ourselves, at home; we are going over the day before — a very still little wedding, only a few people; and Father stays, but Dana and I, and Job, are coming back to the Wave. Ina, I am not glad, oh, I am not glad! Ina! In all this world of live people *nobody understands*

"Your poor Marna."

"*September the sixteenth.*

"Dear Dana: Leave me alone. Oh, leave me to my own nature for these last days and hours! What it is not in yours to comprehend let it be yours to reverence. I stand apart from you, and you seem to me a vast space away from me, like an alien king of an unseen country who has threatened me and mine. Though I make you unhappy, I must speak the truth to you, for

Truth is the king of kings, and outranks your throne or mine, or that on which we are fated to sit crowned together. You ask me do I not love you as I thought I did, that I treat you as I choose to do, in this miracle September?

"On my soul, I cannot answer you, for from my soul I do not know. I thought I loved you; and I was happy when you were near me. Now I know not if I love you; I only know I fear you, and I wish the width of the spaces between the stars and suns were distance between us.

"I feel a magic circle drawn around me. If you cross, you cross it at your peril, for, voluntary sorcerer, I stand within it. I have nothing for you — nothing; I belong to myself. I have fled to the wilderness of Womanhood, where no man ever sets his foot. If you pursue me, I cannot say what I shall do. I warn you! I warn you! It is nothing to me, and less than nothing, what other girls do the days before they are married to other men. I told you I was a Wilderness Girl; and now you find it out, you are surprised and shocked. I would have you know, sir, that a woman is to be obeyed when she makes her will known to the man who loves her. I am not sure that I love you enough to marry you. And, honestly, it does not trouble me that

I give you pain. I tell you, Dana Herwin — oh, but I cannot tell, I cannot tell you! You would not understand."

"*September the seventeenth.*

"MOTHER, I am not fit to be married, I am behaving so badly! If you were not a ghost, I think I should be a better girl — I should act like other girls. And you would teach me how. Mother, it is the holy truth that I packed my bag to-night and ran away. I took the train and went to town,— the late train,— and I meant to send him word that I would not marry anybody, for I could never do it.

"And when I got to town I was frightened at what I had done, for I thought it would trouble Father, and I came back again upon the midnight train alone; and it rained, for there is a southeaster, and I got off at the station, crying, in the wet. And, oh, Mother, there he stood — the Man! His face was white, and his hand shook, and he did not speak at all. He took me home, and in at the side door, and called Maggie, and told me to go up-stairs, and did not trouble me to try to kiss me; but he had such a look that I felt ashamed, and I thought you would be ashamed of me, Mother. So I confess to you. For I have promised that I will marry

him in two days and three nights more. And I am

"Your unmothered and bewildered

"DAUGHTER."

"*September the nineteenth.*

"DEAR DANA: I cannot possibly see you this evening. You will excuse me, I am sure. I have some writing to do, and, besides, I don't feel like it. Can't you go and call on Minnie Curtis? I should think she might amuse you.

"Hurriedly yours,

"MARNA TRENT."

"*October the fifth.*

"TO MY HUSBAND: Oh, I admit it! I take the first excuse I have to write the word. You have never given me a chance before. I do not think we have been apart three hours — have we? — in these fifteen days. Now you are to be three hours in town. It seems a long time. Twenty minutes are gone. I have been sitting here, in the rose-colored room, staring at the clock. I have been trying to decide where I shall put this note to surprise and please you. Dear, I like to please you! But, indeed, I do not always know how to make you believe that I do. You are very patient and gentle with me, and I — I love you!

"I think I will pin it on your cushion with one of the pearl butterflies I wore to fasten my wedding lace. I was glad you noticed the butterflies. I am glad you liked the way I looked. This is part of the miracle. I begin to care so much — too much — for what you like. But now that I try to tell you so, I find that words flit away from me like butterflies — no, no! not that. Rather are my words moths, and they advance and retreat, and circle and waver about the light of my love for you, and dash them headlong, and perish in it. For my love is like a tall, strong candle on an altar; it burns steadily and sacredly before the holy of holies. I know that I have but begun to love you. I know that I shall love you more — I fear to know how I shall love you!

"For I am

"YOUR WIFE."

The Second Note.

"DARLING: Will you mind two notes from me? I cannot seem to find any other way of enduring this separation. I will slip this one under your pillow, so you will find it later than the pin-cushion one. See! I put one of the roses you brought me last night within the note.

I liked the rose; it is just the color of this room. I am writing to tell you that I lose myself without you. I never knew three such hours in my life. I have stared the clock out of countenance: only eighty-five minutes are gone yet. I cannot understand myself; I am quite perplexed. Thou strong and tender! Come quickly and explain me to myself!

"Thou dear Love! My love waits to learn the way of loving from thine own; a bud that shall know an eternal blossom, a story that shall be read without an end. I tried to tell you so last evening; I could not do it.

"The sea is white and still this morning. The fishermen are singing at their nets. Fires are on all the hearths; the sun is warm and deep. I thought September was the bridal month. Now I see it is October. Then I think we shall know it is November. Eden waits in every weather. All down the calendar,

I see Joy smiling.

"Dear, I cannot tell you unless I write it, and I feel that I must tell you, for I owe it to your patience and gentleness to tell you what a foolish, petulant girl she was — that Wilderness Girl. I whisper you a secret. She will not trouble you

any more. She has floated out upon the tide of love,

Beyond the utmost purple rim.

The forest gave her, but the ocean claims her; she is gone forever. And I am

"MARNA, your Wife."

The Third Note.

"OH, teach me how to make you happy! I have everything to learn, I know. But believe me that I care for nothing else — for nothing in this world except your happiness. I will be the most docile and the gladdest scholar that man ever had.

"See, I have almost written this first separation away. I will confess: if I had not written, I should have cried. Oh, you will be home in half an hour!

"Don't be jealous, but I just went up and kissed the clock.

"MARNA, Wife."

III

November the third.

THERE is no doubt about it that happiness is an occupation. When I see how long it is since I have added anything worth adding to the Accepted Manuscript, and when I try to define to myself what it is that gives me such a sense of being busy all the time, I find that it is scarcely more than the existence of joy. What I have lost is the leisure of loneliness; what I have gained is the avocation of love.

They teach us that only in heaven can we expect to know happiness. It is not true! I summon mine — a singing witness in the courts of life. I fling down the glove of joy, a challenge to such dismal doctrine. There are whole weeks when I live in poems, I breathe in song. There are entire days when I float in color, and seem to be set free in space, as a bird is, knowing the earth and loving it, but citizen of the skies and homing to them. I fall asleep as if I were a sunset, and I wake as if I were a sunrise, so near

am I to Nature, so much a part of her beatitude. Nature *is* joy — I perceive that now. I used to think she was duty. How wonderful it is to live in harmony with her, out of sheer joyousness — not conscript, but volunteer within her mighty and beautiful forces!

I am always reading new chapters in the Story Without an End. Every day I turn a fresh page in the book of love. I did not think that it would be so absorbing. Really, it has plot. For, what is the plot of incident beside that of feeling? A tame affair, as thoroughly displaced as a piece of sensational fiction by the great drama of the gospels.

Dana and I have been reading the New Testament together on Sunday evenings. He said yesterday: "What a complete situation!" From a histrionic point of view he thinks the life of Christ the most tremendous and well-balanced plot ever conceived. He admitted that he had forgotten how fine it was.

"Morally fine, at least," I said.

"Morally fine, at most; spiritually, if you will," he answered. He spoke quite soberly for Dana. He is a very merry person; he laughs more easily and more often than I do. I am afraid, sometimes, he thinks me too strenuous. (He said so one day, but I felt so badly that he

kissed the word savagely away.) He is not at all religious. Why does this make me feel as if I ought to become so? I have never thought much about the philosophy of Christianity — I mean as a practical matter that had anything in particular to do with myself — until lately.

"You are a sumptuous little pagan," he said to me Saturday. Now, this did not please me, as he seemed to expect. It left a little dust, like ashes of roses, in my heart. I feel as if I had failed him somewhere.

"I am afraid I am too happy to be religious," I said.

"Then stay irreligious!" he cried. The plea of his lips smothered that spark of sacred feeling; and against the argument of his arms I cannot reason.

How fearful is the philosophy of a kiss! When I think of poor girls — young, ignorant, all woman and all love — I never thought of them before except with a kind of bewildered horror.

I wonder — to anchor to my thought; see, even my thought casts off its moorings as well as my feeling; I seem to be adrift on all sides of my being — I wonder if it is in the nature of suffering to make people in so far divine as it is in that of joy to keep them altogether human.

I begin to see that there is a conflict as old as the axis of the world. Around its fixed and invisible bar every soul of us revolves — so many revolutions to an ecstasy, so many to a pang; and the sum and nature of these revolutions is the sum and nature of ourselves. When I am old and sad, shall I turn penitent and think about heaven? Oh, I am young, I am glad, I am beloved, and I love! Earth is enough for me, for he is in it.

It would be impossible for me to put into words the quality of his consideration for me. It is something ineffable and not to be desecrated by expression. It is my atmosphere. His treatment of me is the very devoutness of love. I breathe a devotion for which any tender woman in the world would die. Though I am wife, thus am I goddess, for he deifies me.

> But while his soul looks up to mine
> My heart lies at his feet.

The difference is that now I am willing he should know when he has my heart at his feet. Once I kept the secret to myself, and confided it only to this dumb paper. There are some delicate lines in the poem when Radha and Krishna were married — the one that begins:

> But when the music of her bangles passed the porch —

November the seventh.

Mrs. Gray talked to me a little last week. She said: "My dear, your mother kept your father at *her* feet. She held him there to the last breath. I tell you a secret, since she cannot. The happiest marriages are those where a wife loves her husband less than he loves her."

"How many such do you know?" I asked her, rather hotly, for my cheeks burned.

She gave me a keen look.

"You have more knowledge of the world than I supposed," she answered slowly, and I thought she sighed.

"Would you have a woman coquet with her husband?" I demanded. "Is marriage an intrigue or a sacrament? You don't know my husband!" I cried — proudly, I suppose, for I was touched a little.

"There, there! Never mind," said Mrs. Gray, as if I had been a pouting child. She began to talk about Robert Hazelton's wedding-present. It is a very odd present. Nobody quite understands it. It is just a gold candlestick made in the shape of a compass, with the candle set at one side as you see them, Dana says, on real compasses. Within is the needle, a black point upon a white enameled dial, pointing to the north. I cannot help liking it; it is so like Rob. Dana asked me if it were meant to convey the

fidelity of superfluous affection, and I could not help laughing, it was so like Dana. Yet, when I had laughed, I was a little sorry. Robert has always thought me a much better woman than I am, poor fellow! Dana invited him to dinner once, but he went away early to see some patients. I believe he has an excellent practice. I wish he would marry Minnie Curtis.

I am writing somehow pettily this evening. I don't know why. My soul seems shriveled a little. Dana is dining out with some gentlemen: I believe it has something to do with politics. It is the first time. I would not have believed that I could be so ridiculous about it. I have devoted myself to Father the whole evening, but the more devoted I was the worse it grew.

It seemed to me all the while as if the sky were put out, and the earth had stopped, and Dana were dead. Then it seemed as if there never had been any Dana, and never would be or could be. Father was so pleased with having me to himself again that it was quite touching. He even called Job, and told him to stand on his head; and nothing could be more pathetic, for Father is not one of the dog people. He is polite to Job, for he recognizes that Job is a gentleman, too; but he has never loved him. On Job's part it is a wholly unrequited attachment.

But for me, I could have cried all the evening. And Job would not stand on his head; he has forgotten how.

He is up here with me now, just as he used to be, quite by ourselves. Poor Job! He kisses me as if he had not seen me for six months — not obtrusively, but with a shy rapture of which no being but a dog is capable. He does not get used to sleeping in the bath-room, but Dana prefers to have him there. He says if we cannot have a home to ourselves, at least we can have our own rooms as he likes them, which is perfectly reasonable in Dana. I find he is always reasonable when he has his preferences consulted. I hope Job will overcome that air of settled melancholy which he wears whenever he regards my husband. It cannot be denied that he never "meets him with a smile." Sometimes I think this vexes Dana. I used to think he loved Job as much as I did.

Dana is very late. It is more than half-past ten. I admit I am rather tired of petting Job. This occupation does not seem as absorbing as it used to be. I cannot read,— I have tried, but I listen so that I understand nothing I read. I hear his footsteps on the concrete walk, past the electric light in the street, whose cool, fair light falls into our room and across it when the

gas is out. (Dana likes that light as much as I do; it was a delight to me to find that he understands the way I have always felt about it.)

As I sit here alone I hear him and I hear him, but they are not his footsteps at all, only the footsteps of my heart. I have seen a picture of "Eurydice Listening," and her body was curved a little like an ear.

It is as if I had become an ear — heart and body; I seem to hear with my forehead and my hair. A lifelong invalid told me once that she heard with her cheeks.

It is eleven o'clock. Job barks in his dreams of the grasshoppers at Sanchester; he has distinctly a grasshopper bark. I know politics stay out late nights, but I did not know Dana meant to go into politics. He told me to go to sleep. Men say such singular things to women.

Job is asleep on my lounging-gown; I hate to move him. I did not have a new one, for I 'm fond of this; but Maggie trimmed it up for me very daintily with yards of fresh chantilly. Dana likes me in this gown. He likes the lace, and he likes the color. He says it is the shade of my ruby. I think that *must* be Dana this time. . . .

It was a caller coming away from the Curtises'. Perhaps by the time I get into the gown, and get my hair brushed and braided, and warm my red

slippers, and fix his candle and all his little things the way he likes, he will be here.

I have put fresh wood on the fire, for it is quite a cold night. The blaze springs, as if it laughed. Crossing before the pier-glass just now, I was half startled at the figure I saw there — tall, all that lace and velvet, and all that color, and curved a little, like Eurydice — bent so, just an ear.

I wonder if Orpheus was in politics?

The leaping fire flares upon my ruby; deep, deep, without a flaw, guardian and glad above my wedding-ring. I think a ruby has never been quite understood. I see now — of all the jewels God created one for women. A ruby is the heart of a wife.

Oh, there! After all! He is striding up the avenue. How he swings along! As if he had the world beneath his ringing feet.

I will not run down. I will make believe that I am asleep, or not pleased that he was out so late. And when he gets to the top of the stairs, and as far as the door —

"Dear Love: Was I cross with you to-day about your golf-stockings? Believe, I did not mean to be. I have had a hard headache, and the sore throat, ever since we went in town to

the Grays' in the storm, and I wore the lace dress because you like it; but it was pretty thin. And I had darned the stockings myself,—I would not leave them to Maggie,—and I was so sure I had filled every single cavity! What a poor dentist I should make! See, I am trying to laugh. But, really, I have cried. It is the first time you have ever spoken so to me, Darling. No woman ever forgets the first time that the man she loves speaks sharply to her: of that I am sure. Everything else would go out of her consciousness first.

"I was so afraid I should cry on the spot, and that would have shamed me before you and to myself, for I don't like people to see me cry. And I think it was because I tried so hard not to cry that I 'answered back' a little.

"Dear, I am sorry. I was wrong. Forgive me, my own! Love never needs to answer back; it is too great to be so small. Silence would be the nobler way. It is, I think, the stronger weapon. But there need be no weapons, God be thanked! between yourself and

"MARNA, your Wife.

"P.S. I have been all over them — the brown ones, and the green, and the gray, and the speckly kinds that are so hard to find the holes in; I

"I WAS HALF STARTLED AT THE FIGURE I SAW THERE."

have worked over the whole pile for a long while, to be sure there are none of those tiny places the barbed-wire fence bites between the pattern. I hope you will not find me so careless and stupid again. I am not much used to mending stockings. Maggie has always done it for Father. But I will see to yours, if you wish me to; of course I will. One day you said so,—had you forgotten?—'Marna, I wish you would mend my clothes yourself. I have always thought how nice it would be to have my wife do such things for me.' So I tried. Dear, I am more than willing to please you about these little things. I care for nothing else but to please you. My heart leans to you all the time. Waking and sleeping I dream, and all my dreams are yours. All my being has become a student in the science of love; and all my art is to learn how skilfully to make you happy. Your frown is my exile. Your smile is my Eden. Your arms are my heaven. Once, ah, once I was—who could believe it now?—your Wilderness Girl. Now, your happy captive, I kiss my chains. Hold them lightly, Love, for I wear them so heavily! Yet lock them; I shall but love you more. Do you remember the day I told you to throw the key away?

"Oh, but you took me from my tribe, you

Son of Battle! You hurled me over your shoulder and ran. Do you know how Father misses me, though we are in the very one self-same house? You have torn me from him, from my own life, from myself. From a depth that you knew not, you drew me, and you slew me; for I tell you in a love like mine is a being slain. To a depth that I know not, you drag me. Ah, be merciful — I love you! — for love's sake!

"If ever the time should come when I could not pour out words like these upon you, if ever the day should dawn when I should be sorry that I had written so to you, or that I had suffered you so to see the beating of my heart, for indeed such words are but drops of my heart's blood — but I scorn myself for that unworthy 'if.' When thought moves without a brain, when blood leaps without a heart, when the moon forgets to swim on summer nights above the tree-house where my lips first drank your kiss, then may I be sorry that I have written as I write to-night to you.

"And I am sure you will never speak again as you did to-day. It was the first time, as it will be the last. I thought if I told you, if I showed you how it slays a woman, if just this once I should put by something in myself that

stands guard over my nature and says, 'Do not let him know,' I thought that perhaps it would be worth while. You might, I can understand, you might hurt me, not knowing. Knowing that you did, I 'll swear you never would, because you never could."

December the third.

Dana has gone into the law office of Mrs. Gray's brother, Mr. Mellenway — J. Harold Mellenway. He is so busy that I see him only evenings, and not always then. I am trying to get used to it. Father says he is making a remarkable beginning in his profession, and that if he sustains his promise I shall have reason to be proud of him. Father repeats that he is a brilliant young man. Dana does not have much time to devote himself to Father now. He seems to be whirled along. We all seem to be whirled along like the figures in the Wheel of Life drawn by some ancient Oriental people,— I forget who,— all ignorant that they are helpless, and all hurled on to a blind fate.

I have been married nearly seven weeks. If he came in some night and said, "Marna, do you know it is seven years?" I should not feel surprised. It is as if I had never existed before I loved him, and it is as if I had lived cycles

since I became his wife. I have traversed worlds that astronomy never knew, and I am transmuted into a being whose nature I do not recognize.

Here in my own room, where I have been such a happy and solitary girl, I see everywhere the careless, precious signs of him — his slippers on my hearth, his necktie tossed upon my bureau, the newspapers that he always flings upon the floor, and that I go and pick up; a messenger from heaven could not have convinced me six months ago that I would ever do it.

So, upon my heart, upon my brain, he flings the traces of his presence, the impress of his nature. It is to me as if my soul were a nickel plate on which is etched a powerful and beautiful picture, of which I know that I know not yet the composition or the scope, and though I love the picture, I fear it, because it is unfinished. But he — he dips a rosebud in a rainbow, and paints him garlands and Cupids, smiling steadily, so debonair he is. There are times (dear Accepted Manuscript, you will never tell) when the lightness of his heart seems to me disarranged from mine — only for the moment, of course, I mean. But yet I love him for the rainbow in him. And perhaps, as Dana says, there is a zone of twilight in my soul. A man does not like to be loved too solemnly; whereas I think a

woman builds within her heart an altar to an unknown god, and leaves her happiest hour to steal away and worship.

December the tenth.

I HAVE discovered a new planet: Dana has a real though untrained musical nature. He has flitted to the piano off and on, of course, and I have sometimes said, "What a touch!" But he has never truly played for me before. Last week he came home with a violin. It seems he sent it somewhere to be mended a year ago, and forgot it (which is quite like him); and now that he has remembered, I am half jealous of the violin, he so devotes himself. He plays with a kind of feeling that I do not know how to define, unless to say that it is passionate, imperious, and fitful. If I said the utter truth to my very soul, perhaps I could not call it tender music. But why say? I have already found that the first lesson a wife must learn is not to admit the utter truth about her husband to her own soul. If she mistranslates, she is unhappy; if she overvalues him, she may be more so. Marriage needs something of the opalescent haze such as betrothal breathes, and daily life goes a beggar for the element of romance. This vanished something Dana's playing seems to be about to recall to us. Just now he has gone music-mad. From

violin to piano, and back to violin, he sways like a mast in a storm. As I write he is singing; there are beautiful tones in his voice, and tears are on my cheeks as I listen. He comes to an unaccountable stop, and runs, dashing up the stairs, to see me.—

I am staying in my room with a headache and a kind of foolish languor. He is so kind to me that I could weep for happiness. What wife was ever so cherished as I? Listen! He sings that exquisite thing which his voice seems to have created, and for me. In point of fact I believe it is Handel's.

> Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
> Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade.

And now he dashes into the superb "Bedouin Love-Song" that he often chooses:

> From the Desert I come to thee,
> On my Arab shod with fire;
> And the winds are left behind
> In the speed of my desire.
>
> . . . .
>
> I love thee, I love but thee!
> With a love that shall not die!

His voice peals through the house like a triumphal procession. Even Father has opened the library door to listen. Job is lying perfectly

still in the hall, with quivering ears, music-smitten, as delicately organized dogs sometimes are. The eternal bridegroom rings in my husband's singing — joyous, imperial, master of the present and dauntless of the future. Oh, I love thee, master of my heart and of my life!

I cannot stand this any longer. What 's a headache? I think if I get into the warm red gown, and steal down very softly, and up behind him before he knows it, and just put my arms about his neck, with no sound at all, and lay my cheek to his (though the tears are on it still)— Oh, hark! How sure and glad he is!

I love thee, I love but thee!
. . . .
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

December the twelfth.

DANA was displeased with me about something (a little thing, too small to write) to-day, and went to his day's work without kissing me. It is the first time. I shut myself in here and cried half the morning. Job's head is quite a mop, for he tried to comfort me.

Awhile ago I went down and telephoned to

the office, for I could not, *could not*, bear it. This is the veracious record of our interview:

He: Oh! That you, Marna? Glad to hear from you. What a lovely telephone voice you have! Well, what is it?

I: I have felt so unhappy, Dear, all the morning! I thought — perhaps —

He: Unhappy? What in thunder *for?*

I: Why, of course, Dana, you know —

He: I have no more idea what you are talking about than you have of the English common law. Do be quick, Marna! I 'm busy.

I: Oh, have you forgotten that you went off without — without —

He: I went off without my handkerchief, if that 's what you mean.

I: *Dana!*

He: *Marna!* Go find it, Dear, and dry the tears out of your voice. I tell you I 'm busy. Good-by. Oh, by the way. Don't wait dinner for me if I 'm not home on time. I am rushed to death to-day. Good-by.

I: But, *Dana* dear —

He: But, Marna dear! Don't bother me. Good-by.

I am thinking of an old French saying: *Elle en meurt; il en rit.* Once, to think of it — to think of it, I mean, in a way that could possibly have

any relation to myself — would have brought the blood stinging to my cheeks. Now it brings only the tears starting to my eyes.

December the seventeenth.

DANA is obsessed with an idea. I find he has a good many ideas. Father was a little vexed with him to-day, and called them notions. In point of fact, Dana wants to build a house, and Father thinks it quite unnecessary and expensive. He wants Dana to wait until his legal income is more assured, offering us till such time our present home in his own house. It is large enough, I admit; we have our own suite, and every comfort, and no more care than if we were figures on a fresco.

Father's old Ellen looks after everything; she has been in the house since I was a baby, and rules the family like a Chinese ancestor. I do not think of Ellen any more than I do of the atmosphere. I don't think I have ever so much as mentioned her in the Accepted Manuscript; she is a matter of course. I suppose my life has been more free from care than that of many girls, especially motherless girls, and that I shall have a good deal to learn if I keep house. But if Dana wishes it I should not mind the trouble; I should like to please Dana. I asked Ellen

whether she thought I could do it so as to please him. She looked at me and did not say anything, only she patted me on the head with her wrinkled hand; I could n't make out at all what Ellen meant. Then I asked Maggie, quite confidentially, whether she would like to work for me if I kept house; for I suppose we could not afford more than one servant, or two at the most. But Maggie said:

"Is it the lady's-maid ye 'd be wanting, Miss Marna? It 's not a housemaid I am accustomed to call myself."

I never felt uncomfortable before the servants before. Sometimes I think they don't like my husband as much as they do me. I never should have believed that it could make any difference to anybody whether they did or not.

I have left the two gentlemen talking it out in the library. Job and I hear their voices as we curl up here upon my lounge to rest. I don't know why I am so tired. Everything seems to agitate or excite me, and then I am tired because I have been agitated. I feel things too much; I am surcharged, like a Leyden jar, and every now and then there is a crash, a sort of explosion of the nerve-force, and I find I am a little weak and spent. I live all the time in an electric world, where everything is tense, and

am liable to accidents of feeling for which I can never be prepared. Dana is always in a hurry, and a more nervous man than I thought him. I think he wants calm and comfort all the time. Sometimes I wonder if he did n't need a serener girl than I am — some one quite poised and comfortable — a girl who does n't mind things. It would break my heart if I thought any woman in the world could have made Dana happier than I can.

Father's voice is quite low and controlled, perfectly modulated, always; he never loses himself. Poor Dana must be disturbed about something. All those tones in his voice that I love least are uppermost to-night. I feel as if I wanted to go down and put my arms about him, and put my lips to his, and kiss part of his voice out of his nature.

December the eighteenth.

It is very suddenly decided — for that is Dana's way: to do things at once. We are to build a cottage of our own here on Father's place. Father will deed the land to me, but Dana builds the house. We shall have to mortgage it, he says. This seems to me somehow a little disgraceful. Dana threw back his curling head and laughed when I said so. I told him he laughed like the young god Pan, so I laughed,

too. Dana's spirits are contagious; that is, all but sometimes. Once in a while I feel as if he tried to laugh away things which are not laughable, and then I am not merry. Father is rather quiet; he does not talk much about the cottage. He only said that it was perfectly natural for a man to want his own home; he finds no fault at all with Dana.

"It will be a good deal of a care for you just now," he said, but that was all.

Dana's voice — his best voice — soars all over the house. He is singing:

> Then stay at home, my heart, and rest;
> The bird is safest in its nest;
> O'er all that flutter their wings and fly
> A hawk is hovering in the sky;
> To stay at home is best.

Now he has slipped into a discord, and stopped the music with a crash. Now he will come running up-stairs, two at a time. I know what that means: he misses me. He will come bounding in. There will be a kiss, a laugh, his arms, his love, and paradise. We shall have a long, happy evening by ourselves. The fire is fair; the sweeping crimson curtains are drawn; there are jacqueminots on my dressing-table; the expectant room is solemn. The winter night is

like the angel Joy, strong and beautiful. It is as I said those first few weeks beside the autumn sea: Eden waits in every weather. Oh, I love him! I love him so that it is as if I could perish of loving and not know that I had been slain.

December the twenty-fourth.

We are all so happy to-night that it seems a kind of theft from joy to take the time to say so. The angel of life is bearing us along on quiet wings. Father is quite well, better than usual, and Dana has done some brilliant thing at court which pleases the governor. The ground is to be broken to-morrow for our new house; it is to stand just behind Ararat, in the garden, near the wall and the electric light. Dana is very merry and kind; no one *can* be so kind as Dana. For me, I am better, and I am happy, too. The doctor (old Dr. Curtis) has quite talked me out of the blues I was in awhile ago. And to-morrow — I thought I had pages to say about to-morrow; but my pen is deaf and dumb. I find I cannot speak, even to my own heart — only to his. I will leave a note upon his pillow; I hope he will like it. At first it was a joy to write them because it was clearly such a joy to him to read them. My brain seemed to be stimulated, as well as my heart, by happiness; thought it-

self was sharpened, and all my feeling and expression refined. There is no inspiration like that which comes of being beloved. I think, if I had been born a writer or a poet, I could have written a great book or song in my bridal weeks.

Dana has been so busy lately that I have not written him many love-notes. It is quite a while since I left one upon his pillow. I put this blank white paper to my lips, and I breathe words upon it, and love them into meaning.

"DARLING: I should like to say that to you which fails me in the saying, for it is our first Christmas eve together, and to-morrow will mean something for us which no other Christmas in our lives can mean. Just this little time while you are reading to Father (I am glad you thought to offer him that pleasure) I am taking the leisure of my heart to write you a wife-note. Do you remember how you used to kiss them? I shall put this you know where.

"The night is strong and still. There is not much wind, and a mighty frost. The snow is like the shield of the great Venus (supposing her to have been a Victory; you know I always fancied that idea; I like to think that she lost her arms trying to defend herself — she, Victory, vanquished). See! the pagan is not drowned

out of me yet, though you have n't called it 'sumptuous' for quite a time, and to-night how can imagination cherish any but the Christian images?

"I admit that the others ring rather hollow. Even the great Venus, solemn and strong, ideal of Unattained Love, — perhaps, who knows? of the Unattainable, — woman from the first heart-beat, but goddess to the end, even she, the glory of paganism — she bows with the shepherds before the Child of Bethlehem. Can't you see just how she would look, the awful Venus, on her knees? I can.

"I am writing by the firelight and the electric street-light, crumpled upon a cricket between the two, the paper on my lap and, Dear, the tears upon my cheeks. I am thinking of the strange light that blossomed on the sky that night in Palestine. I have always thought it was deep pink, like a bursting rose. I am thinking of the village khan and the grotto stable; it flits before me like the plates in a sacred magic-lantern at some religious scene, now this slide, now that, returning on themselves and repeating the effect, and always centering upon one group.

"Dear, I have done all my Christmasing for Father, for the servants, for Job, and for everybody, and I have not much for you; only one

thing. I shall fold it in this note, it is so small. For when I tried to think what I could give you, it seemed to me that there was nothing left. I have given you all I am. How can I, who am so spendthrift of myself for your dear sake — how can I offer you any small thing on this, on *this* first Christmas of our life together? I chose the little gold Madonna for your watch-guard because I could not bring myself to anything else. It was made for me in Paris (if you care to know), but it is to me as if Love had ordered it for me out of heaven. Wear it, Dear, because you love me, because you love *us*.

"I find I cannot write to-night; I cannot think; I dare not dream. I find it out of my power to admit your soul altogether to my own. For I begin to feel now, as I used to do before we were married, that a woman must not exact too much of a man; she must not expect him to understand; she must remind herself that he is a man, and cannot. For a time we have been one, you and I, husband and wife, and the eternal and almighty difference has been smitten out between us by strong love, which makes of twain one being.

"Now, at the very time when we begin to be dearest to each other, closest, most sacred, now we begin again, for I do perceive it, while most

united, to deviate, nature from nature, sex from sex. Already, thou dear lord of me and of mine, I feel with blinding tears that I stand apart from thee, when most cherished by thee. Already I see that I begin to tread a separate and a solemn road.

"Dana! Dana! My heart reaches out to you with an unutterable cry. Try to interpret its inarticulate meaning.

"Forgive this too solemn letter, my dear Love, and love me better for it if you can. If your love does not advance with my need of it, I shall perish of that pause.

"For I can see nothing in all the world of visions this Christmas eve but the Mother with the Child upon her breast.

"Oh, be gentle to

"YOUR WIFE."

May the fifteenth.

WHEN I see how long it is since I have opened this book, I do not know whether to laugh or cry. As a rule I find the former works better. Masculine tenderness is said to respond to tears. I do not find it so. Rather, I should say that a man's devotion fades under salt water, like a bathing-suit, proving unserviceable in the very element for which it is supposed to be adapted.

I never used to be a crying girl; I am quite ashamed of the number of times a week I lock myself into my own rooms to have it out with myself. I suppose it is a physical condition. Nobody sees but Job. He jumps into my lap, more gently than he used to, and kisses my wet face. Heaven knows how he understands that drops on a cheek mean grief in the heart. Sometimes I think that perception of the finer states of one we love is in relation to dumbness. Words, protestations, impulses of the lip, come to mean less as love means more. One of the sages was he who said that conduct is three fourths of life.

Our cottage is done and we move in to-morrow. It is the night before I leave my father's home for our own. There has been too much to do, and I am not quite equal now to the tax upon my strength. I was always such a well, strong girl — poised, I think, in soul and body. Physical malaise is a foreigner to me, and there is no common vocabulary between it and myself. No girl thinks of *this*. When I expected to be most comforted I find myself most solitary. I suppose it is a common, or at least a frequent, experience. Men are so busy and so insolently strong. There is something cruel in their physical freedom.

No woman deity could ever have constructed

this world. I wonder is there not somewhere, softly whirring through space, a planet that the Ewigweibliche has created? There must be a feminine element in Godhead, or woman would not exist. Suppose this were given its untrammeled and separate expression? I like to think what a world that would be, or may be yet, for aught we know.

I am tired — oh, I am tired! I do not feel much enthusiasm about this new house. The sheer strain of building and furnishing has shaken the romance all out of it. A sensible, middle-aged woman once told me that she and her husband came to the brink of a divorce over the first house they built (they are rather an unusually happy couple), and that the only way she prevented the catastrophe was by saying, "Have it all your own way; I will not express another wish about this house." Yet they lived in it comfortably for fifteen years. She had seven children, most of them born in it.

Dana is happy about the house, quite happy; and I suppose this ought to make me so. It would have, once. But I see so little of my husband now that the proportions of feeling are changing. I am afraid they are changing in me as well as in him. I don't mean — no, no! I could not mean that I care less. But I enjoy

less and I suffer more. He is away from home all day and many evenings; sometimes most evenings of the week. And he travels more or less on his professional business or on political errands. I try to think that this is all right, and that it is always necessary. In my soul I know it is not. I am already very lonely. I am perplexed and troubled. I used always to feel beloved. Now I feel hurt much of the time. Such a state as this chills a woman to the heart. My husband sometimes calls me cold; he will say this when I am quivering with wounded love, when I am nothing but one nerve of passionate tenderness bruised. I do not reply; I let him say so. I have tried to make him see how it really is. I have tried so often that I have got through. I am beginning to think that he *cannot* understand.

Perhaps I shall be happier in our new house. And by and by — in October, when I am well again — perhaps he will be different; he will stay at home more; we shall be together as we used to be; and he will be so happy, we shall be so united, that I shall be glad again. I must hold this truth fast; for, from very physical weakness, and a little, I think, from loneliness, it eludes me. The kingdom of love is within us, and "only our own souls can sever us."

I AM too rebel to the primal laws. No Wilderness Girl should ever be married, I think. Oh, the silence and the freedom and the sacred solitudes of maidenhood! I think of them with a passionate hunger and thirst. I remember how Gwendolen, after one of her scenes with Grandcourt, complained to herself that she could not even make a passionate exclamation, or throw up her arms as she would have done in her maiden days.

But she did not love her husband. I never thought to see the time when I should thank God that I do love mine. But now I perceive that if I did not the foundations of the great deep would be broken up. And I should — What should I do? What *could* I do?

Job just pulled something from the basket on my sewing-table and brought it to me, wagging rather piteously. It is the little blue blanket that I am trying to embroider for my son. It grows slowly; I never liked to sew.

Let me learn to be divinely patient, as women can, as women must. I must remember that happiness has not fled from my life at all. The angel Joy will return with a sweet and solemn face. "And a little child shall lead them."

Eleven o'clock.

I HAVE spent most of the evening with Father, for he, too, feels, I can see, the emotion of this

last night before I leave his house. I had read him to sleep, I thought, before I slid up-stairs. Just now the front door opened (with some unnecessary noise), and I ran to the head of the stairs to tell Dana that Father was asleep. But he had gone on into the library before I could attract his attention.

He stays so long that I wonder why. I believe I will go down. . . .

I went. My red slippers are quite mute, and my old ruby gown never whispers. I did not think that they would not hear me, and I came upon them quite suddenly and unnoticed.

The two men were standing in the dim library, for Father had got into his dressing-gown and had come out to meet my husband; I am afraid he had been listening for his son-in-law to come in. He held Dana's hand in his own. Dana looked very handsome and debonair in his evening dress, with his nonchalant eyes, and smiling steadily. Father did not smile; his face worked. As I stood silent and wondering, I saw the sacred tears stream down my father's face.

"Oh, be kind to her!" he said. "Be kind to her!"

May the sixteenth.

Too tired to sit up, I write this lying flat on my new bed in my new room, in our new house. It

seemed a pity not to sanctify the date by one warm word; for we moved over in a cold storm — one of my own northeasters. All the garden trees are tossing like masts in a gale, every green sail flapping. The old apple-tree, on a level with our little library, turns a strange, familiar face to me in the rain, like the face of a friend whom you had never seen cry before; there seems to be no way to wipe off the tears, and they stream on steadily. This is the more noticeable because we really are not sad at all.

The cottage is quite comfortable, and I should not have thought it would seem so attractive by gas-light; it is very bright, and all the colors are warm. There is rose in my own room. Why is it that color means something less to me than it used to do? Once I should have responded to the tinting of this room (it is really very good) in every nerve. Now, somehow, it does not seem to matter very much. I suppose that is physical, too. Most things are, to women. Who said, "There is a spiritual body"? Paul, I suppose. Nevertheless, there is philosophy as sound as it is subtle in those five words.

The new maids are buzzing about the new kitchen. It seems like a doll's house. Maggie has gone to Mrs. Gray. Old Ellen takes care of Father, and he has connected the two houses

by telephone. Job is plainly homesick, and will not go to bed. Every time the apple-tree hits the tree-house he barks in a melancholy manner, and Dana cuffs him for it, for Dana cannot bear anything melancholy.

There is a banshee in my house, I find. My speaking-tube to the cook's room catches the wind and wails beyond belief. Job growls at the banshee.

Dana is so happy that I wonder I do not feel happier. There is a new piano, and he sits singing. Somehow he seems to me like a new husband. But I am quite aware that I do not seem to him like a new wife. I wonder if I ever shall again? He plays with his nonchalant touch:

> Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
> Home-keeping hearts are happiest.

Yes, here it comes; I hoped he would not forget it. I really do not know why I did not want to ask him for this song. Something of the bondage of maidenhood seems to remain in a wife, a kind of impossibility,— I do not know how to express it,— a power not herself which makes for silence, the terrible law which takes from a woman's love even that which it hath, and forbids her to woo even her own husband. I do not

know whether this is a right law or a wrong one, a tradition or an instinct. I do not think women are alike in this. Perhaps it is relative, too — so much freedom in her nature to so much love in his. The banshee is quite overborne as he sings joyously:

> From the Desert I come to thee,
> On my Arab shod with fire.

May the twentieth.

The new maid (her name is Luella) hit the new sofa *bang!* against the new library wall to-day, and bit two bites out of the new old-gold calcimine. Dana was very angry. I did not know for quite a while after we were married that he was such a quick-tempered man. I feel very sorry for him; it must be so uncomfortable to be quick-tempered. I am differently constituted myself: I grieve.

I think he thinks it is my fault when he is angry. I wonder if it is? Of course I am not always right; and then, a woman is in such physical discomfort most of the time. To-day I answered Dana very positively. He scolded Luella so that she gave notice on the spot. I never heard a girl give notice before, and it was a disagreeable experience. We never had any trouble with our maids in Father's house. I have

always grown up with the feeling that families that changed servants were not quite respectable. I told Dana that he ought to leave the management of the servants to me. He said, "D—n!" Then he put on his hat and went out. There is no music to-night. Luella and the cook are conspiring in the kitchen, and Job and I are tête-à-tête, exchanging confidences.

May the twenty-first.

DANA was charming this evening. I think he is sorry. I had found some good old prints of Landseer's dogs, and cut them out and pasted them up over the breaks in the calcimine, above the sofa, something like the frieze of a dado; really, they have quite an effect of their own.

"You always were clever," he said, and kissed me twice. Job was positively jealous of the Landseer dogs. We held him up, and I stroked the dogs, and Job growled and snarled and flew at them. Dana was immensely amused. He named one of the dogs David, and the other Dora. We have had a happy evening, and Luella has consented to stay.

The night is all a palette of pale greens and fair blues and grays after the storm, and there is no banshee. The apple-tree is in blossom, and the tree-house is drifted with snow of pink and

pearl. Dana asked me to come out into the tree-house with him. "Subpœna Job for witness," he said. "He can testify — what you have the air of forgetting, my lady — that I took the first there. Nothing can undo that."

"I wonder if anything can ever undo anything?" I said, laughing too. So I climbed up into the tree-house to please him; but I was so tired and physically wretched that I am afraid I disappointed him, and I could not stay very long. I think Dana really tried to reproduce something of the old glamour, and when he found that it was missing, he thought it was I who failed to supply the materials of romance. No wonder.

I read a story last week in which the author took upon himself to remark that the experience of prospective parentage was equally hard to husband and to wife, because, "while she bore her sufferings, he bore her complaints"! It is unnecessary to observe that this piece of fiction was written by a man. This paragraph is quite superfluous, — I believe women *are* superfluous by nature, — for Dana has been very kind to me to-day. I have just telephoned to Father that I am quite happy.

"*June the tenth.*

"DANA MY DEAR: I do not think it will be necessary for you to hurry home if the trip is

doing you good. And if there is any professional reason, as you say, for prolonging it a few days more, never mind me. I cannot say, to be honest, that I am very well. The hot weather has leaped upon us like a tiger from a jungle; I never was torn by it before. But I am not suffering for anything in particular, except you. I suppose a husband's presence is one of the luxuries that a wife must learn to go without. That seems to be the modern idea. And I am too busy to mope or sentimentalize about you.

"Things are going after a fashion in the house. The room being smaller than I am used to, I think I feel the hot nights more. And Luella has given notice again, and again consented to remain.

"Father is a little troubled about the effect of this weather on me, and has been doing something about the Dowe Cottage for August and September. What do you think? He asked me to ask you to telegraph if you approve. The idea is that we should go there (to visit him), and stay till all is over. Dr. Curtis urges it. I must say I should like to go. On these breathless nights, in my stuffy little rose room, I seem to see waves breaking on the window-sill; but they never get over. I can almost smell the salt, but I never feel the spray. And, then, we

were so happy there! I can't help feeling as if the old joy were shut up in that cottage, like a tenant who was locked in, and would fly to meet us, and take us in his arms, and bless us both for now and for ever.

"I am your loving and your lonely

"WIFE."

June the tenth.

I HAVE just written to Dana about the Dowe Cottage. I am afraid it was not exactly a love-letter; somehow, I could not. If I had let him know how much I miss him, I do not think he would quite like it altogether. Why is almighty Nature forever laying a coal of fire upon a woman's lips?

So I wrote quite stiffly and serenely; and when I had finished the letter I cried, for nobody but Job could see.

I just got up and went into his room, and touched all his little things — the brushes on his dressing-case, his slippers lying where he tossed them (for he never likes to have me move them to put them away), his ash-receiver, with a half-burnt cigar just as he left it. Then I went into the closet where his clothes are hanging, and put my cheek to them all, one after the other. His blue velveteen smoking-jacket hung inside the door;

he wore that one day when he seemed to love me more than usual, and — I could not help it — I kissed the velveteen coat. I kissed it several times.

June the fifteenth.

I WENT out about the grounds to-day to oversee some workmen who were grading, but was quite overcome by the burning weather, and I think I had something like a faint, or touch of the sun. When they helped me indoors the house seemed to rock and reverberate with Dana's voice, and it was as if he were singing:

> Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade.

I could scarcely believe that he was not there.

"*August the tenth. West Sanchester.*

"MY DEAR HEART: You have been very devoted and kind to me ever since we came here, and I want to bless you for it. I know that you have been working too hard and need a change, and I am sure it is quite safe for you to be away for a little while. If you want to try the mountains after Bar Harbor, I would not prevent it on any account. As long as you keep within reach of the telegraph it will be all right. I thank you for giving up the Adirondack trip, for I do think that was too far away just now. Continue to

write and telegraph as faithfully and lovingly as you have done. I depend on that more than you know. A wife is one of the foolish folk; you cannot exact man's poise or wisdom of a woman's heart and body. I never love you so much as when you remember to love me and to comfort me in little ways.

"How handsome you looked the morning you left, my beautiful! You went swinging down the avenue. I wanted to go to the station with you, and because I could not I cried a little; but not till you had quite gone. I watched you till you were out of sight. The light was splendid on your hair and forehead as you lifted your hat and kissed your hand. I thought: 'If I should never see him again, what a vision to keep with me in this world, or to take with me to another!' Women will have such thoughts, my darling; we *wait* too much to take life lightly. Be patient with

"MARNA, your Wife."

TELEGRAM

"*West Sanchester, August* 17.

"*To Dana Herwin,*
"*Maplewood House,*
"*Bethlehem, New Hampshire.*

"Come at once.

"FRANCIS TRENT."

TELEGRAM

"*West Sanchester, August* 18.

"*To Dana Herwin,*
"*Care of Conductor, White Mountain Express,*
en route for Boston. Try Portsmouth.

"Don't suffer. I am not in any danger now. But the blanket ought to have been pink.

"MARNA."

"*August the eighteenth.*

"DEAR FATHER OF MY DAUGHTER: They let me write, in pencil, for I insisted. Father will give it to you at the station. I convinced the doctor it would be better for me than to talk—at first. I don't want to speak. I only want to be touched and kissed—and for you not to go away again. All I want, all I want in this world, is you. I shall get well. There will nothing go wrong now you are here. Oh, I cannot say that it was not hard—without you. At first I thought of everything—motherless young wives, and women with drunken husbands, and the poor, unwedded girls: all womanhood seemed to pass by me in a pathetic procession, drifting through the room. And I thought, 'I am one of them.'

"But after that I thought of nothing—no-

thing in earth or heaven but you — not of the baby at all, only you, *you*.

"Stay by me when you come, Darling! Don't let them persuade you that it will harm me. It will save me, and it is the only thing that will. They thought that I should die, but I could not die when you were so far away. That would have been impossible.

"Dana, Dana, I live, and I love you. For I am

"THE MOTHER OF YOUR CHILD."

August the thirtieth.

THIS is the first time I have been allowed to write (to amuse myself), and I am limited to eight lines. "Being happy," I remember Hawthorne said, "he had no questions to put." Being happy because my husband gives me every moment that he can beg or steal from time, being happy because he is so happy, because he blinds me with tenderness, I have no letters to write. Instead, I record the fact that my daughter is two weeks old to-day, and that Job is so jealous of her that we cannot keep them in the same room. I think he is planning definite hostilities. Job finds her more objectionable than David and Dora.

IV[1]

November the tenth.

I HEARD of a man the other day whose wife went into his room to kiss him good night, and he said: "Mary, why do you do this? I do not love you. There is no other woman in the case. I have not wronged you. But I no longer love you. If I were you, I should not kiss my husband under these circumstances."

This is a true story. Minnie Curtis told me the names of the people. I repeated it to Dana to-day, and he said, yes, she had told him that yarn. He finds it quite a relief, he says, when

[1] Upon careful examination of the manuscript of which these confessions are composed, the system of dating is found to be, after the manner of women, quite a matter of accident. Days of the month or week are usually observed with something like accuracy, but there is no reliable calendar of the years.

The next available record occurs apparently a year and some months from the date of the last entry given in these columns, and which was coincident with the birth of the young wife's child.

A close study of the copy reveals the fact that certain pages of the Accepted Manuscript are missing, having been torn rather than cut away, and presumably destroyed.

What letters, if any, have shared the same fate, it is impossible to say.—M. A.

he is tired and the baby is crying, to run in to the Curtises'. He met Robert Hazelton there, the last time, consulting with Dr. Curtis. The old doctor is not well, and makes over a good deal of his practice to Robert. I asked Dana if he thought Robert saw much of Minnie; but Dana says that Robert has no time to talk to girls — he says he does n't think he is that kind of doctor. It leaped to my lips to ask Dana why he was that kind of lawyer. But I did not do it. If I had, all the answer I should have got would have been: "You don't classify quite correctly. I 'm going into politics," or some equally clever parry. Nothing would have been gained, and something lost — something of that indefinable advantage which a wife (more than a husband, I think) retains with self-possession. A woman can never afford to be cross. Why is it that a man can?

The first lesson of a wife is to learn when not to speak; I doubt if she ever learns why not. I am a dull pupil in the school of marriage. No Wilderness Girl takes to the higher mathematics with any natural grace. If it were not for my daughter — well, if it were not for my daughter? It *is* for my daughter — the insurmountable fact, the unanswerable question, the key that locks me to my lot. If I fled back to my forest, she

would cry for me. And if I strapped her on my back and ran — I don't think the governor's granddaughter would make a successful papoose. She is much more like her grandfather than like me, thank Heaven. She has his equable mouth, though it curls at the corners more than his. I think she will grow up into a comfortable young lady, and marry a congressman, and be happy ever after. There is nothing of her father about her yet, except his eyes; hers already have the insouciance, but not the insolence, the superfluous merriment refined by her sex. I have studied her anxiously. She bears my mother's name.

"Marion," I said to-day, "I am glad you are not a boy baby."

She gave me an elfish glance, and the corners of her mouth curled. I never saw a sarcastic baby before.

November the twentieth.

I HAVE the outlines of a Greek tragedy before me. A girl I used to go to school with married a brilliant young fellow of her own social class, whom she adored with that kind of too tolerant tenderness for which, as a sex, we seem to be distinguished. Some overlooked heredity, rooted two generations back, resulted in drinking, and drinking resulted in worse. He left

her last spring for a woman such as Fanny never saw in her life. Fanny has two children, and that sort of ill health which heartbreak creates in women, a disorder not catalogued in the medical books. Her family lost their property when her father died, and to-day I had her advertising cards. They set forth the fact that Mrs. Fanny Freer, masseuse, will treat patients at their own homes for one dollar an hour. She will also repair ladies' dresses, and cut and make children's clothes.

I call it Greek because she has not made any fuss about it, but has endured her fate with a terrible and splendid dumbness for which, again, as a sex, we are not distinguished. She is a little blonde thing, too, with a dimple, and a bow-and-arrow mouth, and always had more gloves than I did at school.

I have been ailing lately, I don't know just why. I wonder if I could afford to send for her a few times? It might be at least a comfort to her to come here, where she will be asked to sit at table with the family.

In face of a fate like this, how my half-grown troubles hang their heads! I seem to see them in a row, standing like school-boys punished for playing at Indian massacre. "You foolish fellows!" I say. "You are a shabby lot. There

is n't an Indian among you! Any respectable tomahawk would disown you."

I am beginning to understand that happiness in marriage is an art. I used to think it was a gift. In short, what I thought was a right proves to be a privilege.

November the twenty-third.

. . . I HOPE I have not been exacting with Dana. He calls me so, when he is vexed about anything. I never was thought exacting in any other relation of life; but marriage makes a new being of a woman: a wife is as truly born into an unknown world as her child is. It seems to me that I have my own character to form, as completely as my daughter's. I, Marna Trent, slain on my wedding-day, am a transmigrated soul — the "twice-born," as the Buddhist calls it. I am in my second existence. . . . Will there be any others?

I found something in one of Max Müller's Oriental Bibles yesterday over in Father's library, when I went to sit with him and read to him, for Father is not quite well this fall, and it is touching to me to see how he clings to what he calls my "womanly tenderness." (He never said that I was exacting.) Here is what I read to Father:

Though I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by a strong wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

. . . Oh, I cannot deceive myself, or call things by opalescent names, any longer! My husband is not kind to me, he is not kind!

November the twenty-seventh.

We took our Thanksgiving dinner with Father, and Dana went to the Curtises' later in the evening. I had to come back and stay with the baby, to let the girls go out. She is asleep, and the house is as still as resignation. I cannot write, and have been trying to read. Dana says I do not keep up with current thought, and that a wife should make herself as attractive to her husband intellectually as she was before marriage. The first sentence I fell upon was this, from a French critic:

> It is well that passionate love is rare. Its principal effect is to detach men from all their surroundings, to isolate them, . . . and a civilized society composed of lovers would return infallibly to misery and barbarism.

I think a woman should be quite happy in order to keep up with current thought. Current feeling is as much as I can manage.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

"*November the thirtieth.*

"*Main — 20.*

"*To Mr. Dana Herwin, from Mrs. Herwin.*

"*By the maid to the office-boy. Peter will deliver as soon as Mr. Herwin comes in.*

"Dr. Curtis sent Dr. Hazelton over to see the baby this noon. He calls it croup. When will you be out? MARNA."

TELEGRAM

"*New York, November* 30.

"*To Mrs. Dana Herwin.*

"Called suddenly to New York on business. Did not return to office. Hope child is better. Address Astor House. DANA."

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

"*The office-boy to the maid.*

"Say, Luella, you tell her he ain't got that message. He took the Limited, and never showed up, only a district messenger that sassed me, and I showed him the door.

"PETER."

TELEGRAM

"*Astor House, New York, December* 1.

"*To Mrs. Dana Herwin.*

"Yours received too late for midnight express. Will return Limited. Hazelton all right. He 'll bring her through. Cheer up. Will catch the 3:12. If baby better, telephone station. In that case, take later train. DANA."

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

"*December the first.*

"*To Mr. Dana Herwin,*

"*Care of Chief Operator, West Station.*

"Marion is out of danger. Do as you please about hurrying home. She is still sick, but safe.

"MARNA."

December the first, 10 P.M.

I KNEW he was a good, true, clever man, but I did not know before that Robert Hazelton could work a miracle. I never thought to see the day when I should be glad that old Dr. Curtis could not get to my sick child; but it is my belief that if he had — The new methods and the new remedies are wonder-workers in the control of an able and alert mind, fresh from everything and afraid of nothing. Robert was always a courageous fellow; but he is so quiet about it that one must know him pretty well to rate his intellectual and moral independence at anything like its value.

Together we fought for the baby's life all night. What a night! Solemn, separate from all nights, it stands apart in my life — the look of my child's face, the way her little hands clutched at the air; and the strong, still figure beside me, grasping her from death. . . . He

told me to go to bed, and that she could be trusted with Luella. I can't do it. I don't think I could do it even if Dana had got home; and he won't be here till half-past eleven. He telephoned that it was very important, something political, and that if the child were out of danger, he would take the eleven-two; unless, he said, I wished him to come right out? I told him to do as he pleased, and that it was not at all necessary.

He is away so much that he does not seem necessary in these days to very much of anything. I suppose most wives have that feeling. I hope they do not all have another, which persists and pursues me — this feeling hurt, *hurt* all the time. My whole soul is raw, as if it were flayed with some petty instrument or utensil, like an awl or a grater; something not to be dignified as a weapon.

He says he loves the child as much as I do. I thought at first that we should grow nearer and be dearer on account of the baby. But I am kept at home so much with her, and I can't go about, as I used to do, with him; and Dana hates sickness, and all babies are ailing more or less. Even the experience of parentage, which I thought was to unite, seems subtly to divide us. Everything almost that we experience de-

velops the sundering, not the soldering, quality. One day Mrs. Gray said to me:

"My dear, marriage is full of phases. Don't mistake them for finalities."

I suppose that is my tendency — to look upon the stages of a thing as the end of it. When one is caught on a barbed-wire fence, one does not contemplate the beauties of the horizon.

I am writing because I cannot sleep till he gets home. There would be no use in keeping Luella up, and I am happier to watch the baby. Only to hear her breathe is ecstasy. All last night I had a strange, scared feeling. It seemed monstrous that her father should not be there if she died. And when she lived, it seemed somehow abnormal that it should be Robert who saved her. I have never thought of him as a doctor, only as one of my old friends. In fact, since I have been married, I have scarcely thought of him at all.

He, on his side, seemed to have forgotten that we were ever friends. He was all doctor. I don't think he had an idea in his head except to save my baby's life — not because she was mine, but because she was a baby. His face was set and stern; it was as strong as bronze. His peremptory orders rang like those of some military man, a stranger, or some one you had only hap-

pened to meet. I always liked his voice. I don't think he looked as short as he used to. It seemed to me as if he had grown. He came again at noon, and again this evening. When he went away at nine, he said: "Go to sleep. The child is safe. Do not sit up for your husband. You are exhausted."

"I will meet him at the station and tell him to come in softly," he added, as he shut the door.

I did not even thank him, or think, till afterward, how kind that was, or how like him. If I had, I doubt if I could have spoken. His manner was as impersonal as if he had been a physiological laboratory. Now that I think of it, I don't believe he gave the least evidence of anything that could possibly be called sympathy in all that terrible time. I begin, now that the strain is over, to perceive how kind this was in him. I wanted my husband so all the time, I perished so for Dana, that one tender word would have demoralized me. I should have cried my soul out. And that would have been bad for the baby. I suppose physicians acquire a sorcery about all these things; they never cross the magic circles.

I wonder if I ought not to write to Robert and thank him properly?

"DEAR DR. HAZELTON: I disobeyed you, for I cannot sleep till my husband gets home. So I am writing. And I know that I shall rest better if I try to tell you how we feel about what you have done for the baby. But, now that I try, I cannot tell you; all my words deny me. Her father will see you at once, and express to you our affectionate gratitude for the professional skill and the personal kindness which have saved our child. I expect him now, every minute.

"Yours gratefully and as ever sincerely,

"MARNA HERWIN."

December the twelfth.

I HAVE been shut in so much with the baby, lately, that I have read rather more than usual. I hoped this would please Dana, but I can't say that he has seemed aware of any accumulated intellectual force in me. He says I am narrowing to a domestic horizon. Thinking to amuse him to-day, I carried him this, from an old author:

Woman ought every morning to put on the slippers of humility, the shift of decorum, the corset of charity, the garters of steadfastness, the pins of patience. . . .

. . . But it is by no means proved that even then a man would not find his wife a little overdressed.

He laughed.

"That makes a good point," he said. "A

fixed sense of moral superiority has a tendency to become tiresome. A fellow resents being always put in the wrong."

"Even if he *is* wrong?" I asked.

"Possibly because he is wrong," replied my husband, with a changed expression. He glanced over the book, and left the room abruptly. I saw him go over to the Curtises' on his way to the trolley; there were fifteen minutes to spare. I did not feel at all surprised — perhaps not really altogether sorry — that he did not spend those fifteen minutes with me. Once I should have grieved. I could hear him playing a duet with Minnie, some rollicking thing. He says she accompanies very finely; his violin has been over there for some time. After he had gone, I took up the book, which he had laid face down upon the baby's crib. His swift and slender pencil-point had run beside these words:

Only a saint can endure a wearing woman.

"*December the thirteenth.*

"My dear Dana: Will you be patient with one of my constitutional notes? It is a good while since I have written you any, for I see that they sometimes annoy you in these days, and indeed I do not mean to be troublesome. But do

you realize, my dear, how hard it is becoming for us to talk? I so often displease you, God knows why. Or you hurt me, though I am sure you do not mean to. I find sometimes that if I have anything of any consequence to say to you, I must write it, or not say it at all. You call it second nature in me to write my heart out. I wonder if it is first nature, and speech only the second one?

"At all events, I found the sentence you had marked in that old English book yesterday. I think you can understand that it has troubled me a little. Do you mind telling me, Dana, what you meant by marking it?

"Your loving

"MARNA, Wife."

"*Thursday afternoon.*

"DEAR DANA: If you have really forgotten what sentence it was, there is nothing to be said.

"MARNA."

Friday evening.

DID he forget? Had he truly forgotten? If so, either I am "too strenuous," as he calls me, or he was too frivolous. If not, then I am not strenuous enough, and my husband was not — quite — no, no, no! Forever, no! Not to my

own heart, not to this secret page, will I pronounce the word.

A "wearing woman"? She who was the dearest, the sweetest, the gentlest, the most tender, the loveliest of girls, the noblest of wives — to him? I who had all the superlatives of love crowded at my feet, treasures heaped for my sake in a passion of such adoring madness as an older and wiser woman than I might have spent herself upon, and must have trusted — I, Marna Trent, once free and glad, now afraid to own to my own soul how sad I am — now bond-slave to this man for my love's sake, and for his — do I *wear upon* my husband?

Then God help us, both the man and the woman, if this be true!

If I had been like some girls I have seen, if I had not cared, or taken pains to please him — Why, I know a young wife who danced all night one night when her husband lay battling for his life at the crisis of typhoid pneumonia, and he lived too, poor fellow. Even in our own set, and we are not at all "smart," thank Heaven! such things go on as I cannot, I *cannot* understand — other men and other pleasures, *any* other pleasures but those he shares with her, and their children abandoned to nurses, and a wall of snow forming all the time between the husband and

the wife; glittering snow, beautiful, carved, like the mattress that Catharine of Russia presented as a bridal gift to some persons whose marriage she did not favor, and the mattress was found to be cut out of solid ice. . . .

. . . And yet, if a woman does not make a man happy, has she any right to assume that it is his fault? It seems to me as if the blame must be my own, in some perplexing way that I do not understand. If my mother were alive, I suppose she could tell me where I am wrong. To whom can I turn? The popular creed that married people should never seek advice of any third person seems to me a doubtful dogma. The two-in-one life tends, by a subtle chemistry the formula of which is too abstruse for me, to definitely distinct points of view, and only the ideal oneness can reconcile these; if not reconciled, they may need a third view as much as hydrogen and oxygen need an electric spark to combine them. There are times when I think that Dana is wholly in the wrong, because his offense is so obvious. There are whole weeks when I try to feel myself in error, implicit if not explicit. My standards of right and wrong are wavering, like flags in the breeze; serving to show only which way the wind is, and sometimes so twisted

around their poles that they are of no sort of use — as flags. Then, there is more or less wet weather, when they hang limp and soaked.

I saw a steam-carriage the other day take fire from its own gasolene, owing to some defect in the machinery; it burned up, yet it did not explode; the sealed tank remained true to its duty. Is it miracle or science that married happiness may come so near destruction and yet retain the sealed tank — fire within fire — solid and safe?

If he is right, then I must be radically wrong. God knows, if He knows anything about me, how much I would rather suffer than not to be right in this subtle and fatal contention which marriage evolves from love. Or, again, I would, how gladly, be proved to be in the wrong, if that would make him right. I do not ask to be this or that, if only he is blameless. Sometimes I think nothing else in life matters at all.

A nature may crumble from sheer disharmony in its own elements. A man may be a beautiful amalgam: gold on his brow, and iron in his arms; but if his feet are clay, he falls.

Women kiss the clay, and cover it with their

hair, and baptize it with their tears, even as she of the sacred story kissed the Holy Feet, as white as marble, and as strong, which trod the dust of Palestine patiently — never any less the feet of a man because they left the imprint of the God.

I READ to-day about a vine that is impelled by hunger and thirst. "During a severe drought, if you place a basin of water at night say two feet to the left or right of a stray vine, in the morning it will be found bathing in the basin!" It was a squash-vine, by the way.

Camille Flammarion said that he knew "an heroic jasmine which went eight times through a board that kept the light away from it." Some teasing person would put back the jasmine in the shade, "hoping to wear out the flower's energy, but he did not succeed."

If a woman were a jasmine, she would be "heroic." If I were a squash, I should at least be respected for the hunger and thirst of my nature.

December the twenty-third.

POOR Fanny Freer came here to-day, for I have not been very well. I kept her to luncheon, and gave up everything else and sat with her as long as she could stay. She has not many pa-

tients, and sewed for Marion in the afternoon. She carries herself with a touching dignity. I watched her dimple and her bow-and-arrow mouth, and then the lines on her forehead, as if I had seen a baby crucified. Neither of us mentioned her husband in any way, though she spoke of her children freely. We talked a little about the perplexities of modern life, as they affect women. I think I expected to find her embittered, or inclined to rate marriage by her own pitiable experience. Nothing could be further from the fact. I think she makes a point of her sweet reasonableness — a definite struggle. And she thinks there is no country where there are more happy marriages than in America.

Then I suggested that women are apt to reason too much from personal data. I did not add that she had developed the force of character to rise above this racial trait, but I wished to do so. Fanny is one of those rose-petals that unexpectedly produce the strength of oak-leaves; not falling before storm and sleet, but holding the harder. One sees such women.

I asked her — she has had some experience in her business in town, before she moved out here — whether she found patients infatuated with their doctors.

"Very seldom," replied the masseuse, "unless

now and then a married woman whose husband neglects her because she is sick." She added that a doctor would find it hard work to cultivate illusions about his patients, and that this fact alone was enough to clear the atmosphere.

I never cared for Fanny at school, but now I could love her if I had time. When she went away, I wanted to throw my arms about her and cry:

"How did it happen? How do you bear it? Why are you alive?"

Instead, we talked of neuralgia and patterns. I never knew anything about patterns before. It seems there is a vast world where these things are important to women.

I wonder if I do not overweigh my troubles. Dana says I do. He says I have a genius for being unhappy. Yet it seems to me as if I did not ask much to make me happy — a kind word, a kiss, some little thoughtful act. All a woman wants is to be considered, to be valued. All she wants is love — *all* she wants is the Life Eternal. I suppose this is an immoderate demand — something like the demand of a moth for personal immortality.

December the twenty-fifth.

CHRISTMAS again! I have had a happy day. Dana has been at home all day, and last evening

he came in laughing, and splendid, with Marion's first Christmas tree across his shoulder — he handsome enough to break a woman's heart if he did not love her, and perhaps (God knows) if he did. Mine melted before the vision of him as the ice was melting on the tree-house. It is a South Carolina Christmas, and needs only a wild pink azalea in the tree-house, or the scent of jasmine on the wet, warm air.

"You beauty!" I cried. "You look like the Santa Claus ideal. I 've always thought it a mistake to make an old man of him. You are young, immortal fatherhood. Kiss her, Dana!"

I held the baby up, and he kissed her rapturously; then he put her down and took me. No, it was not rapturous — no. And yet I think it was love. I tried not to think, not to reason about it. I have learned that it is not wise for a woman to philosophize about love, and that it is dangerous for a wife to do so.

Job began to whine when my husband kissed me, as he has always done from the very first; he never gets used to it, and lately he has had something of a respite from this source of melancholy. There is that in the dog's constancy which touches me, I must say. He has become accustomed to the baby, though he still cherishes a smoldering jealousy of her. But his feeling

"WITH MARION'S FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE ACROSS HIS SHOULDER."

about Dana is something finer than jealousy. In fact, Job never accepted the man for the master; why, then, he reasons, should I?

Dana and I covered the Landseer dogs to-night (they had grown too shabby) with a dado or frieze of Greek figures. I cut up an old book of Parthenon plates for it, and Dana helped me paste them on; he did not once object — he was very kind. And he patted the Landseer dogs, and called them David and Dora, and Job growled and snarled at them, and Marion laughed like a brook at Job: she has developed her father's laugh. He has given her a boy doll (of all things) nearly as large as herself, and she is flirting with it like a summer girl with the only man in the hotel. Dana named the doll Dombey.

We went to Father's after Marion was in bed, for he is too feeble to get over here; and I read to him awhile. Dana asked me if I minded his running over to the Curtises' for some music while I was reading. I said, "Not in the least." I was so pleased at his asking me that I did n't care at all. And when we came home he sat down at his own piano, and tossed his curling head, and sang:

Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest.

Then he wheeled on the piano-stool with his beautiful, best look, and crushed me to his heart.

"You 're a dear old girl!" he said.

December the thirty-first.

A SUBMERGED country! The Atlantis of the New England climate has evaded us, and it is incredible that azaleas can swing their pink lamps anywhere, or that jasmine can breathe its heart out on any loving air. The tree-house is stiff with icicles this morning, and the world has got itself into armor, and stirs formidably and heavily, like a medieval lord who kisses his lady in the evening and leaves her in the morning for the wars.

The transformation happened in the night. It was still warm last evening, and Dana brought Minnie Curtis over to play for him here; but the furnace was overheated, and they went out on Ararat and serenaded me, instead; he played his violin, and they both sang "Where'er you walk," and some other things that he used to sing to me. He asked me if I did not enjoy it, and said he thought he was giving me a treat.

"Why in thunder did n't you come out with us?" he asked when he came in, after taking Minnie home.

"You knew Marion had one of her throats,"

I said. "I could n't leave her — even if I had been invited."

"A wife should never wait to be *invited*," he retorted. "It looked queer, that 's all. A wife ought to think how things look."

"And a husband?" I ventured. "What about him?"

The moment I had said it, I would have unsaid it at any estimable cost. I think it was George Eliot who suggested that half the misery of women's lives would be prevented if they could only teach themselves to keep back the things which they had resolved not to say. But a resolution is a mathematical matter,— takes perceptible time,— and my fate was too swift for me.

"I should n't have thought," observed my husband, coldly, "that you had it in you, Marna, to be a jealous woman."

Then, indeed, I turned upon him.

"*I? Jealous?* Of Minnie *Curtis?* . . . I should as soon think of being jealous of Dombey!"

"I would n't insult your neighbors, if I were you," he blazed. "A rag doll —"

"Dombey is n't rag; he 's wax," I interrupted.

"Wax, then," said Dana, pettishly. He went into his own room and shut the door — hard.

This morning I scarcely dared to speak to him, he was so manifestly offended, and he went to his day's work without the ceremony of a kiss. That a kiss should ever become a ceremony — is this most pitiable or most merciful?

When a liner is in fear of invisible icebergs she takes the temperature of the sea to test the question of their vicinity.

When my husband came home to dinner, I took all the temperatures I could, dipping here and there, and recording my poor little thermometers, as women do. Half the time I am sawn asunder by the conflict between love and self-respect. In men these two are one flesh; in women — oh, in women they must be sometimes, or the race would be exterminated by civil war. (I think there is a declaration of war between my metaphors, but, thank Heaven, I am not writing for the magazines.)

At all events, I found a field of icebergs driving straight across the bows, and put the ship about. Marion and Job and I are spending the evening up here by ourselves — and Dombey. Marion is asleep in her crib, and Dombey reposes beside her, as usual, with his head hanging over the crib-rail, and his feet on the pillow. I have some doubts of the effects of this habit upon my daughter's manners, Dombey is so big

and so very boy; but Dana thinks it an excellent joke. Marion has begun to demand a little brother, and perhaps Dombey may fill the deficiency. Dombey has become a painful subject to me all at once, since last night. I could burn him up, or snip him to pieces. I took Marion to-day to see a big lady doll in a shop, in hopes of effecting an honorable exchange; but though the lady doll, two feet high, and glorious in a wedding-dress spangled with gold-dust, hung upon the arm of a red bridegroom in a fireman's uniform, my daughter clung obstinately to Dombey. I must say I respected her loyalty, while I cannot say that I did not pity her for it. Where will it take her twenty years hence?

Does Dana expect me to come down and storm his tenderness? Must a woman make all the advances after marriage, as she must make none before? Then shall we never be happy, for I cannot, *can*not do it.

Must she always be the first to institute reconciliations? Must she forever forswear herself, and say, "I was wrong," though she knows, on the honor of her own soul, that she was right?

Thursday evening.

VOLTAIRE said that a man could never be in the wrong if he made the first advance toward an offended woman.

NOTE SENT BY LUELLA

"DEAR DARLING: Don't let us make each other miserable any longer! I cannot bear it. My heart will break, to live this way. I will come down if you wish me to — or perhaps, even, you would come up? I will do whichever you wish, whatever you want, anything to make you happy, Dear. Only be kind to me, Dana! Only be tender and loving, as you used to be, and I will try harder to please you, to do as you wish, to be what you require:

> Meet, if thou require it,
> Both demands,
> Laying flesh and spirit
> In thy hands.

Was I wrong about Minnie? Did I speak petulantly? I did not mean to. I don't care how much you play duets with Minnie, indeed I don't. I am not one of the foolish folk. I scorn a jealous wife as much as you do. And that was why I felt so— But never mind that. Forgive me if I was wrong, Dana, and let us be happy again! We used to be happy. We know we can. We are not chasing an experiment, but holding an experience.

"Darling, shall I come down to you? Or

would you rather — Do whatever you would like best, only love

"Your

"WIFE."

An hour later.

I HAVE stopped crying,— it waked the baby,— and have lain crushed upon the pillows as long as I can bear it. He sent a note by Luella — the first he has ever written to me in the same house. He did not come up at all. I pin the note upon this page.

"DEAR MARNA: I don't feel very happy to-night, and I doubt if we can amuse each other successfully. Your note is all right, and I accept your apology, of course, and we won't say any more about it. But I think I 'll go to town for the evening, and come out on the last electric. If I don't get out, don't worry. I should be at the club. Go to bed and to sleep.

"Affately, DANA."

A GREAT mood has taken the weather since sunset. The ice has suddenly yielded again (like a woman), and a storm is coming up; it will be a fight between sleet and tears all night. The wind raves about the tree-house, and the banshee in my

room begins to moan slowly and subtly, as if she were trying her voice with a view to a mighty outcry by and by. The soul of the storm is in me, as it was in the beginning and ever shall be. Worn and worried as I am, half disillusioned of myself, yet would I escape myself for the storm's sake, and because I feel in every fiber of my being as if it would shelter me. I would fling the window up, and let myself go, and ride upon the wings of the east wind, for it understands me, and I love it, and I would trust it, though it took me God knows where. And I would be borne into some wide caverns of the night, where love is always tender (being love), and tenderness, because it is gentle, is always true; and where a woman, lest she perish, is cherished by the mystery that won her.

. . . And what, pray, would become of my daughter? And Dombey?

January the twentieth.

Some people came to dinner at Father's yesterday, with wives; and he asked me to come over and help him out. Dana was away, so I went alone. After dinner the ladies discussed various social phenomena of the day; they did this with delicacy and earnestness; they spoke of noble

friendships as distinct from ignoble follies, and one of them suggested that salvation from the last might lie partly in the existence of the first. The other hesitated.

"Friendship needs nourishment as well as love," she said, "and one goes hungry in a week."

"I should call it — about — five days," replied the other, slowly. Then they both laughed, and changed the subject — to the religious views of the new governor.

I could not join in the conversation intelligently, and I did not find it amusing. I have never felt the need of friendship. My husband has always been my friend. Now — is he so much as that? He seems to be eluding my real life by a strange and fatal process. I do not know how to account for it, or how to define it. It is as if I stood on the edge of a precipice, and saw him disappearing from my sight, a hundred feet below, drawn down by a quicksand of the true nature of which he is, or chooses to appear, ignorant. The descent is subtle and slow; it is not even dignified by the anguish of conscious death; debonair, and smiling steadily, he sinks by inches. I can even hear him sing, as he succumbs without a struggle:

I love thee, I love but thee!
. . . .
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old —

If I sprang, and dashed myself down to reach him — what then? He would probably stop singing (he has stopped, this minute, abruptly and unhappily) and observe without a smile:

"A wife should not annoy her husband."

It is possible that he might select the word "pursue"; he is capable of it; and that would outrage me so that I should quite regret my amiable impulse. If we could sink together, there would be some comfort in it. I am sure I should not mind a quicksand in the least. I would rather suffer with him than be happy without him. But he — he would be happy at any cost. I do not think it is at all clear to him whether default of happiness is to be attributed to the institution of marriage or is (more simply) my fault.

Friday.

DANA has lost his engagement-ring; he says the tourmalins were growing shabby, anyway, and one of them was broken.

"*Sunday evening.*

"MY DEAR DANA: After what has happened to-day, I cannot — no, I *can*not see you again

to-night. Luella will bring up Marion's supper, and I do not want any. I am sorry to leave you alone on Sunday evening.

"No, I shall not say anything to Father. I must bear it as best I can.

"Your Wife."

"*Midnight.*

"Oh, ask me to forgive you! Ask me, Dana! For love's sake and your own sake — not for mine. All my being stretches out its arms to you. I would forget — would love you, trust you, and begin again, if you will *try* to be more patient with me, if you will remember to be kind to

"Your

"Miserable Marna."

March the thirteenth.

Dana has the grippe, the real thing; he has been sick for ten days, and persistently refuses to have a doctor, so of course it has gone hard with him, poor fellow. I have taken care of him as best I could. I have not had my clothes off for three nights, for he needs a good many things, and one takes cold so easily, getting in and out of a warm bed. I brush his hair a good deal, to make him sleepy, and I read to him hours at a

time. A man is so unused to suffering that a woman, if she loves him, cannot help being patient with him; that is a matter of course. If she can help it, if she resents the natural irritability of his race too much, I am almost prepared to say that she does not love him.

Sometimes, when I am very tired, when I can scarcely keep on my feet, and he does seem *almost* unreasonable, I say to myself:

"Suppose you had never had the right to take care of him? Suppose he were sick in some remote place, and you could not get to him?"

An hour ago he fell heavily asleep, for he insisted on taking a dose of laudanum (I could not help it; he will, now and then, when he has pain to bear), and I was on the edge of the bed beside him, for I had been trying to magnetize the pain in his head with passes of my hands. I could, for the first year after we were married, quite often, but not lately. I had hoped to forestall the laudanum in that way to-night; but he would not give me the chance; he would not wait. So I was sitting cramped and crooked (that is why I am writing, to try to drive the ache out of my body by a little exercise of my brain), and his handsome head lay upon my arm and shoulder, and his curling hair stirred with my

breath. He looked more than ill — he looked lonely and wretched; and for the first time I saw lines across his forehead, the real carving of life cut clearly.

"He, too, has unhappiness," I thought. "It is not I alone. In marriage one cannot do anything alone — not even suffer."

"You poor, poor boy!" I thought. And I laid my cheek upon his, and then I kissed him softly. He did not wake, and I kissed him a good many times — as I used to do. He did not know it.[1]

"*July the sixth.*

"Oh, Dana, can't we begin again? Is there no way of blazing our path back through the forest of married life? I tell you, from my soul, if there is not, we are lost. I do not know how it is with you — I do not know how anything is with you in these times on which we have fallen; sometimes I think I understand almost any other friend I have better than I do my husband. But, for me, I perish. All my nature is astray, a homeless, hapless thing.

"Do not think that I blame you, Dear, or throw our mutual misery too solidly upon your

[1] A three months' silence precedes the date of the next entry, but no pages have been mutilated or removed from the manuscript. On the contrary, there has, it seems, been no effort whatever to add to the record in any way.—M. A.

shoulders. I know that I was very young, that I gain the tact of experience more slowly than most wives, that I crave a good deal of tenderness — perhaps I am 'exacting,' as you say. I know that I do not learn to be alone readily, and that I grieve over little things. I am afraid my heart is a ganglion, not a muscle, for it quivers and winces at everything. Indeed, I try to be different, to be patient, not to expect too much. Oh, believe that I do try to be the kind of woman you prefer.

"It seems to me that if we could go back and try all over again, we might be happy yet. Love does not die. Love is the life everlasting. It suffers maladies and syncopes, and it may be hard beset, and have to fight for its life — but it is alive, Dana, and it must be cherished like any other living thing. We have laws and penalties for the slayers of men. What court sits in judgment on the murderers of love? Somewhere in the spaces and silences there must be such an inviolate bar. Shall you and I go there, handcuffed together, waiting judgment? Oh, my darling, what can we plead? Mighty joy was in our power, and we slew it, between us. We were the happiest lovers, ours was the maddest, gladdest bridal, we had reverence and ecstasy, and our real went so far to outrun our ideal that

we left our ideal behind us — and now the feet of our real move heavily, and the race is spent. We covered the face of delight with our marriage pillows, and smothered it till it breathed no more. So we buried it, for it stared upon us. We two, man and woman, elected to a great fate, slayers of a supreme love, recreant to a mighty trust — who will take our brief?

"MARNA, a Wife."

"*Sunday evening.*

"MY DEAR HUSBAND: I have reached the point where I cannot *live* and go on as we are.

"Your loving and unhappy

"MARNA."

"*Monday.*

"DEAR DANA: I think if I *could* die, I should not hesitate long. MARNA."

"*July the tenth.*

"DANA MY DARLING: What happened this morning distresses me so that I cannot wait till to-morrow, and you said you should not come back to-night. What can I do for you to make you happier, more calm? You have not been yourself for months, I think. Are you ill?

Does something ail you that you keep from me? I am sorry if I called you cross when you were suffering. I ought not to mind things so much, I know. I think this terrible weather is too much for you. I feel it a little myself. If I were you, I would go directly to the sea somewhere, and I send this in to the office to propose it with all my heart. I will not mourn, and I will try not to miss you.

"As you say, we cannot afford to move the whole family; and as you see, I cannot leave Father this summer, he is so feeble. He spoke of the Dowe Cottage in the spring, but lately he has said nothing about it; he acts a little strangely about his affairs. Has it ever occurred to you that he has lost anything — any property, I mean? Once he would have told you; but lately you have been so busy, and you see so little of him. And he never talks business to me.

"As long as Marion keeps well, I can stand it. Dear, I don't mind it much. I can take her over to Father's, where the rooms are large enough to shut up; and we shall get along nicely. I think you had better go to Bar Harbor or to Nova Scotia at once, if you feel like it.

"Your loyal and loving

"MARNA."

TELEGRAM

"*To Dana Herwin,*
"*Digby, Nova Scotia.*

"Yours received. I did not mean that at all. Oh, try to understand! MARNA."

"*July the thirtieth.*

"MY DEAR DANA: I telegraphed because I could not bear it that you should mistake me so. I am sure by this time that you will have re-read my letter and my meaning. Must it come to this, that you and I need a new vocabulary to interpret each other — in small, common matters like this? The 'little language' of love we have lost the art of, like electives one learns at school or college, and then forgets. But the Queen's English, Dana! Do I use it so stupidly? Am I so crass with it that you cannot take me right?

"Try to understand me, Dana! A loving wife is not abstruse. I don't feel in cipher. If I express myself so, it is because I am so afraid of offending you that I am not natural, and so I am not simple. I do not feel at home with my own husband. I try too hard to please you, Dear! I need so to be comprehended that I cease to be comprehensible.

"Oh, try, Dana, *try* to understand
"Your wholly longing, always loving
"WIFE."

August the seventeenth.

THE date when a woman accepts the fact that the man she loves cannot or will not understand her, and that she must abandon the attempt to make him do so, is one of the birthdays of experience. These are as definite as the other sort of birthday — as my daughter's, for instance, which occurs to-day.

I don't know whether her father has forgotten it, or whether his letter is delayed. He has been in Washington on some business (I do not know what; I have given up asking now; he gave up telling some time ago), and was so overcome by the cruel heat of the place that he has fled to Maine to cool. I think I read yesterday that the President is in the Rangeleys on a fishing-trip. Dana knows the President, who was a friend of Senator Herwin's, and I have fancied that he values this important acquaintance as one which he does not owe to my father. It is a week since I have heard from Dana. I must say it occurs to me to wonder whether he has gone fishing with the President. In that case, letters will be uncertain. Dana likes to do the

uncertain, and I will try to be prepared for anything.

I have bought the big lady doll for Marion, but she regards this acquisition to her family indifferently. Her devotion to Dombey is unassailable. In deference to this feminine weakness, I contributed a golf-suit to Dombey's wardrobe. She has named the lady doll Banny Doodle — a mystical appellation, intended, I think, to be a term of reproach. She is two years old to-night. She calls her father "Pretty Popper," and cried, when she woke up, because Pretty Popper had not come home. To be exact, she calls him "Pity Popper."

September the fifteenth.

I ONCE knew a discontented woman who lost an eye and lived in danger of perfect blindness. She became suddenly cheerful and charming.

"It is so much to keep one eye," she said.

It is two weeks since he came back. He did go fishing with the President, and I heard nothing from him for ten days; but that seems now so small a trouble, all my troubles are such dwarfs beside this which has happened, that I look upon myself with contempt for having ever been disturbed by them. Life seems to be a long chromatic scale, all its major notes expressed by

its minors, or the other way if you choose. Suffering is purely relative.

Who said, "The young are only happy when they experience pleasure; the old are happy when they are free from pain"? I have ceased to be young, but have not learned to be old.

My husband is going as consul to Montevideo. The appointment was offered him, virtually, on that fishing-trip, and he formally accepted it the day before he came home. He did this without consulting me.

September the seventeenth.

It is only by fragments, as I have the strength or can compass the courage, that I can write anything about it. Yet I have a confused consciousness that I had better record (though to what end God knows) some of the events of these days — which flee by me like racers running on thorns, blood-tracked.

He began the night he got home, nervously, as if he were flayed to have it over:

"Marna, I have accepted an appointment."

"A pleasant one, I hope, Dana?"

"To me — yes. I don't think I have been well lately. I want travel, and distance, and a pretty abrupt change of scene. It is a foreign appointment."

One quick "*Ah!*" escaped me. After that I did not speak for a good while. I took up the baby, and put her in my lap, as if she were a shield between me and my husband. When I could not look at him, I could bow my face on her soft hair, and it steadied me a little.

"The President was glad to oblige my father's son. He would have done something different, something better, I think, if he could. There was no other post open but this just now. I don't mind it; I want a different climate — I am really not well, though you never have found it out. Besides, I want something out of the common course — a new experience — fresh life. A man of my type is not adapted to New England. He perishes of ennui in the life I lead here. At any rate, I 'm going. I am going in October."

"You did not — speak to me — about it." My lips were so stiff that I am not sure they articulated the words, but I thought they did. "I am — your wife. You did not — tell me."

"What would have been the use?" he said. "You would only have made a fuss. My mind is quite made. I am going to Uruguay."

Then I know I spoke out, I think I cried out: "*Uruguay?*"

I held out the baby at my arm's length between us. I felt as if she might, as if she must,

protect me from what would happen next. I sat staring.

"Do shut your mouth," he said fretfully. "That expression is not becoming."

I put the baby down, for my head swam; I thought I should drop her. She ran over to him, calling "Pity Popper!" and poked Dombey into his arms to be kissed. He did not touch them, either doll or child. I thought he dared not trust himself. His face worked. I think he said;

"We might as well have this scene over."

"And I?" I said. "And Marion? And Father? Father is failing; he is a dying man. You knew I could not leave Father — now! You *knew* we could not take the baby — to Uruguay."

"You can do as you please," he replied stiffly. "You are my wife. You have the right to come, of course. Or I have the right to ask it, for that matter. But I do not press the matter. I wish you to please yourself."

I got up and went to the window and looked out at the tree-house. It was moonlight, as it was the night he kissed me for the first time, and the shadows from the vines were floating over us. I could hear Minnie Curtis warbling at her piano. She was practising one of Dana's songs:

Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

I went back, and put my hand upon his arm. "Do you desert me?" I asked.

He threw my hand off with an oath.

"Put me in the wrong — as usual! You always do. I 'm tired of your everlasting superiority. If I did leave you, you could n't blame me. Nobody could. We ought to be apart — we wear on each other — we need absence, a good dose of it, too. We only make each other miserable. We —"

This was not all. I cannot write the rest. Some of his words will sound in my ears till my funeral bell.

"Very well, Dana," I said. "Do as you please."

"I do not leave you, you understand!" he cried hotly. "You are welcome to come with me. Or I will send for you by the next steamer, after I have found some sort of a place for you — if you prefer. You are at perfect liberty — to come, if you choose."

"And Marion?"

His eye wavered.

"And Father?"

"I did not marry your father. You are my

wife. You can accompany me, if you wish, of course."

"I shall sail," he added, "the seventh of October."

He was as white, by then, as the wedding-dress of Banny Doodle, whom Marion had dragged contemptuously by one leg, and flung head downward in her father's arms. I stood staring at those two spots of whiteness — the doll's dress and the man's face. Everything else in the room had turned black. I could not even see my child. But I heard her rippling:

"Pity Popper!"

I think she asked him to kiss her. And I think he did.

V

October the twenty-first.

THE great crises of life are not, I think, necessarily those which are in themselves the hardest to bear, but those for which we are least prepared. My present fate has the distinction of possessing both these features. Like many forms of distinction, it is more uncomfortable than enviable.

I suppose one ought to be glad if one is capable of the sardonic. Perhaps it is a healthy sign. Probably that class of people who pass their lives in a chronic fear of being or of being thought "morbid" would call it so. On the contrary, I doubt if it is a sign of anything but the mere struggle for human existence. I am the mother of a child, and I must live. Since I must live, I cannot suffer beyond a certain point. I dimly perceive that if I could rise to the level of something quite alien to my nature, I might thrust off by sheer mechanics a measure of what I endure. I wonder if this expulsive power is scorn?

There should be schools of the prophets for a betrothed girl or a bride. She should be taught to pray: "I find myself deficient in the first trait of character necessary to womanhood. Lord, give me scorn."

I meant to record to-day — again to what end who knows? — something of what has happened. But I find I cannot sit up long enough. The pen shakes in my hand like a halyard in a storm.

October the twenty-seventh.

I HAVE written many letters to him, but have not sent one yet; I can't do it. If I am wrong, I shall be sorry and repent; so far, I do not find it possible.

He sailed on the seventh of the month, as he said he should. For a long time Dana has done everything that, and precisely as, he purposed. I cannot remember when he has yielded to an expressed wish of mine because I expressed it. Perhaps I should have given this more weight, as a sign of deviation in his feeling toward me; but in fact I have regarded it as a form of nervousness. Yet I cannot see that he is ill, except now and then, as everybody is. Indeed, much of the time he has been in better health than usual — vigorous, animated, often excitedly so. He has had many moods and phases, but in one

respect he has undergone none: his determination to break away from his surroundings has been sustained till it became inflexible. A consulship is only the mold into which his will has hardened. It happened to be Montevideo. It might have been Venice or Constantinople, the Philippines or Hawaii. He cabled, as he had arranged, and said that he was safe and well.

What took place between him and Father I never knew, and probably I never shall. The inevitable interview occurred the next day after he hurled the news at me, for it could not be said that he broke it. He came from the other house with face like clay, gray and stiff, and locked his library door upon him. How he received this, the first and probably the worst of many strokes which he must meet, I am not likely ever to be told. Men wince under another man's rebuke, I observe, when a woman may pour her heart at their feet to no visible impression. Father is as dumb as he in the marble group of the Laocoon. He has aged ten years since Dana went, and weakens visibly every day. We have scarcely dared to talk about it, either he or I. He sent for me once, and I went over, and knelt beside his chair, and laid my head in his lap, and said:

"Never mind, Father!"

He put his hands upon my hair, and seemed to grope for me; and then he began to sob — my father! I have never heard that sound before, since my mother died. I think he said: "Daughter Marna! My poor daughter!" But his words were broken. When I had comforted him a little, and kissed his wet face, and laid my cheek upon his gray hair, and blessed him, and calmed him, he struggled to his feet, and held me at arm's-length, and read my face with the look which used to be called "the governor's eye" when he was in his prime.

"You shall not stay — on my account," he said with the governor's voice. "You shall accompany your husband. I will not come between you. Ellen can take care of me; and I have been thinking perhaps some of the cousins would consent to live here and look after me a little. I should not need it very long. A wife's place is beside her husband. I will not consent to come between you and yours."

I know that my eyes fell before my father's. I think I thrust out my hands to ask him to spare me. But all I could say was:

"Don't, Father! don't!"

I tried to tell him that it was not he who came between me and my husband; but I

"'MY POOR DAUGHTER!'"

think he understood without the telling, for he did spare me.

"I am not going to Montevideo," I said. "There is nothing to be done, Father. I have decided. I shall not accompany my husband — not now."

Monday evening.

Like a hurricane, gust upon gust whirling, the days that were left drove by. Dana became suddenly quiet and strange, almost gentle. I helped him in all the ways I could think of about his packing, and little things. I sewed a good deal, and mended all his clothes myself, not letting Luella touch anything. And I asked Robert Hazelton to put up a case of medicines for him for sudden illness, and tucked it in between his golf-suits and his old blue velveteen coat — the coat I used to kiss. Robert hesitated, I thought, about the medicines. His face was set and stern. But he gave them to me. We did not talk about my husband's going to Uruguay; and I am sure that he had already heard of it.

Oh, I did my best! It was a miserable best, for I do not think I am a brave woman, and sometimes I crumbled to ashes. Then I would go away alone, for a while, to regain myself, or busy myself with some order — anything that I

could think of that would give Dana any ease or comfort. I got everything that he liked for dinner, all his favorite soups and meats, and the pistachio cream and sponge-cake. I find myself wondering if he would not have liked escalloped potatoes better than soufflé. And I would have given five years of my life if the fire had not smoked in the dining-room, and annoyed him so, that last day but one.

The last day — the last day! If I write about it, should I stand a chance of forgetting it for, let us say, the span of one omitted pang? Sometimes it works that way. I slept a little toward four o'clock, between then and six. The banshee moaned so that I had to stifle her with a handkerchief. Once, in the night, I am sure his door opened, and once again I thought it did. And once I am sure that I heard him weeping.

I did not cry — not then. I only lay staring and still. That sea-song which he read to me in the Dowe Cottage before we were married kept coming into my head:

> The stars swing like lamps in the Judgment Hall
> On the eve of the Day of the Last Awaking.

I got up at six, and took care of Marion, and put on my old ruby gown. I had made up my mind not to go to the train with him, and I was

glad I had, for when he saw me, the first thing he said was, "So you are not going to see me off?" with unmistakable relief. I think he was afraid there would be a scene in the station, or perhaps he really felt as if he could not bear it, himself. It would be something if I could believe that.

There was, in fact, nothing left to say or do, by that time. He had arranged with Father about all sorts of business concerns, and taught me how to use my check-book (I never had one before), and he had done all the proper things. You might have thought he was only running over to London and back for three or four weeks.

"I will find some kind of home for you when I can look about," he said several times. To this I made no reply.

"I will let you know at once, as soon as I come across anything," he repeated. But I felt that there was nothing to be said.

"You don't seem particularly anxious to join me," he complained. "Of course I don't wish to make myself disagreeable about it. I will write often," he added, "and shall cable as soon as I arrive."

When I asked (still not replying), "Have you packed your thick silk flannels?" he flushed.

"Other husbands do such things," he urged. "Other wives accept and accommodate themselves; they do not claim a martyr's crown for the ordinary episodes of political life. You will get along, I am sure. You are very clever; I never knew you fail to do anything that you tried to do; and your father will relieve you of all business cares. You will do nicely until we can be together again —"

"Do you want a photograph of the baby to take with you?" I interrupted. I folded one in an envelope, and handed it to him, writing on it her name and age. Nothing was said about a picture of myself; nor did I speak of our being together again; I could as well have said it in the throat of the grave. I watched him strapping his trunks as if I were watching the earth being shoveled between us.

Marion ran up and sat on the steamer-trunk, and commanded him, stamping her little foot: "Pity Popper take Baby widing! Take Dombey! Take *Baby!*"

While we were packing his valise, a hand-organ came up Father's avenue, and began to play negro melodies. There was a woman with the man, and she sang shrilly, to a tambourine:

Keep me from sinking down!

It was a bright day, and the maples on the avenues were of the topaz color, and had the topaz fire; they met against the sky like the arch of joy in some strange world where people were happy. But the woodbine on the tree-house, the one we planted the fall we were married, was ruby-red.

At the last, some power not myself compelled me, and I ran out and picked a leaf of the red woodbine from the tree-house, and looked for a photograph to pin it on, but could not find any. It seems he had taken one, after all. And so I put the leaf into his dressing-case; but first I kissed it. He did not know.

When he had said good-by to Father and to the servants, he kissed the baby, and put her down, and looked about for me. I was up-stairs, for all I could think was to get away, not to be seen by anybody; and he followed me. I thought he would. He came into our own rooms, and shut the door. I think he held out his arms, I think he spoke my name several times, but in very truth I do not know. I only know that the fountains of the great deep stirred and rose upon me. A woman's poise, self-control, self-respect, purpose, pride, resolve—these are grand sounds, great words: a woman's breaking heart defies them all.

I think when he tried to kiss me that I hid my face, and slid from his lips to his breast, and down, with my arms around him, till I clasped his knees, and so sinking, I fell and reached his feet. And then I called upon him, and cried out to him—God knows what—such cries as heart-break utters and the whole-hearted cannot understand. I suppose I begged him not to go. I suppose I prayed him for love's sake, for mine, for the child's, and, above all and everything, for his own. I suppose I spent myself in a passion of entreaty which I cannot remember, and he will not forget,—I, Marna, his wife,—wetting his feet with my tears. I have moments of wondering why I am not ashamed of it. I think of it stupidly, without emotion, as something which had to be—the inevitable, the revenge of nature upon herself. It was as if I watched the scene upon some strange stage, and criticized some woman, not myself, for an excessive part she played.

Last night I dreamed it all over, as if it were a play, and I sat in the audience, and Dana and I were on the stage. But when I looked about me, I found that the audience was serried with women, thousands upon thousands—that all Womanhood had thronged to the drama, and sat weeping; and suddenly I saw that the house rose

upon me, because I alone did not weep, but criticized the woman on the stage.

"She is nature!" they cried. "She is ours, and of us, forever."

But I looked into my husband's face, and I saw him debonair and smiling, and I cried out upon the women:

"Then is nature set against nature, and womanhood and manhood are at civil war."

So I woke, and the door into Dana's room was open, and I remembered what had happened.

A SHORT letter has come from him; it said that he was comfortable, and would give details by the next mail, and sent his love to Marion.

November the eighth.

I WILL not be ill, and I cannot be well, and therefore am I racked. Dr. Hazelton wishes me to suffer him to offer some professional service; I think he said there might be consequences which I did not foresee if I received no care. I shook my head, and he turned away; and then I called him back and thanked him, and shook my head again.

What could he do? I am broken on this wheel.

SENT

"*November the tenth.*

"My dear Husband: I have your letters and your cable, and thank you for them. I have not written, partly because I have not been very well; but I am not at all ill. When you write more particularly, I shall know better what to say. So far, I feel as if I were writing into the air. I shall become accustomed, no doubt, to the new conditions, and adjust myself to them. Marion is well, except for one of her throats. She talks a good deal about Pity Popper. Father remains about the same, and there is no news except domestic items, which would not interest, and might annoy, you.

"I am, faithfully,

"Marna, your Wife."

UNSENT

Undated.

"Dear Darling: I write you a thousand letters in my heart, and I fold them there, and seal them with my kisses, and blur them with my tears, till the words lean one upon another, and cling to each other so that they are illegible for very clinging, as lovers are lost in oneness for very loving.

"I am trying to bear it, since you have willed

it — oh, believe I try! I keep hard at work, and am busy with Marion, and I am a good deal with Father, for I *will not* wade into my misery. If I do, I shall be swept away. There is terrible undertow in a woman's nature — it would hurl me into an abyss. I wish I had been a different woman for your sake, Dana — not to mind things so, and not to grieve. I think if I had been of another fiber, coarser-grained, if I had not cared when you were not tender, or when I was alone so much, if I had been ruder of nerve or tissue — do you suppose you would have liked me better? I spend my nights thinking how I could have been a better wife to you. I can see so many mistakes I have made, so many ways in which I could have done differently and pleased you better. I dream a good deal about it, and always that you have come back, and that we are happy again, and that you love me, and are glad to be near me, as you used to be. But I do not ask you to come back. Act your own nature. Have your will. If it kills me, remember that I tried to bear it. Though it slay me, I will not pursue you with my love — my bruised and broken love.

"Did you know you left your blue velveteen coat, after all? I found it on the floor, and hung it up in your closet. I was rather glad you did leave it, for it comforts me a little. I kiss it

every morning and every night — a good many times at night. It is fortunate that it is an old coat, for the shoulders and sleeves get pretty wet.

"Your desolate

"MARNA."

December the tenth.

DR. ROBERT allows me to go down to dinner today, the first time for some weeks. I think I must have been pretty sick, yet I cannot see that anything in particular has been the matter; everything is in good condition, unless there has been a little feebleness of the heart's action; but there is no real disorder, Dr. Curtis says. He has been in a few times to see me, but left the case, as he leaves most of his cases now, to Dr. Hazelton. Possibly there has been some congestion in the brain, hardly enough to call a fever — and, really, I don't care enough what ails me to insist on knowing, unless I am told. Neither of them has shown any uncontrollable desire to tell me what has been the matter.

One night when I was lying in a sort of stupor, seeing strange things and thinking stranger, and not supposed, I am sure, to be capable of hearing any, I must have absorbed fragments of conversation between the old doctor and the young.

"Have you thought of trephining?" asked

Dr. Curtis, with a doubt and a dogma warring in his voice. "If there should be anything in the nature of a concealed inflammation—"

"Would you operate for heartbreak?" demanded Robert, fiercely. "There is absolutely nothing else."

"*Damn him!*" cried our old doctor.

Dr. Robert did not answer. He got up and went to the window, and stood with his back to Dr. Curtis;—a short, strong figure, as stern as granite, he trembled like the river of light which broke through the closed blinds against which he stood. I saw the sun-motes whirling about his head and shoulders at the moment when I recognized him in that flaming stream.

Now that I am better, and look back upon it all, I can see that it must have been Dr. Robert's face which I saw so often when I was the sickest—a calm, protecting presence, tireless and strong. I scarcely remember seeing Fanny at all. I could have blessed Robert, but I do not think I did. I dreamed so much of Dana, and had such visions, all the while. I thought I should die, and Dana so many thousand miles away. Nothing was of any consequence but Dana.

I wonder if I talked about my husband? Much? I dare not ask; and Robert would

cheerfully be put to the second question, but he would not tell. I am glad that the doctor is not a stranger, if there must be a doctor at all. I suppose, really, he has been very kind to me. I must remember to thank him.

To-day I found some of my letters to Dana put away carefully in a drawer in his desk, but not locked. I have taken out a few, and put them into the Accepted Manuscript: they will be safer there.

December the eleventh.

It occurred to me to ask the doctor if anybody had told Dana that I had been ill.

"Your father," he said, "and I."

"You did not cable for him?" I fired. I felt the color slap my cheeks. Dr. Robert made no reply. "I will never forgive you," I cried, "if you asked him to come home — for *this!*"

"The danger was not so imminent as to make it really necessary," he answered quickly. Afterward this reply struck me as less candid than it might have been; but I did not pursue the subject, for I saw that I had pained the doctor.

To-day my husband's letters came — two or three of them, blockaded in the mails. They express the proper amount of concern for my "indisposition," — that was the word,— and re-

quest to be promptly informed of any change for better or for worse.

What *is* it about that phrase? Oh, I remember. It was for better and for worse that we gave ourselves to each other.

Wonderful, those ancient oaths, sanctified by centuries of bridals! One must reverence language drawn out of the live, beating human heart — an artery of love through which a mighty experience has poured.

"In sickness and in health"? "Till death us do part"? Who knows but the time will come when the marriage service shall be thus amended? —

"Till sickness us do disenchant." "Till distance us do part."

Fanny Freer took her heart in her mouth today, and warned me in so many words that I was becoming vitriolic.

"It is quite unnecessary," she said. Fanny has taken care of me since I have been ill; I have named her Mercibel — Angel of Sickness, Beautiful Mercy. When her dimple dips into her bow-and-arrow mouth she is irresistible. How divine is the tenderness of a woman! It has ineffable delicacy, the refinement of a self-abnegating nature, a something passing the affection of man. A woman hungers and thirsts for the

compassion of her own kind. I lean to Mercibel; "for my race is of the Asra."

Men have little tenderness, I think.

I HAD written so far when the doctor called. I must say Robert is very kind to me. There is a certain quality in his manner which I do not know how to define; an instinctive or an acquired forgetfulness of himself, a way of thinking no suffering too small if he can relieve it, no relief too insignificant if he can offer it. I am told that his patients love him devotedly, and that he sacrifices himself for poor and obscure persons to an unfashionable extent, so that Dr. Curtis and the older men feel quite concerned about him.

"Are there not hospitals and dispensaries?" they say. I believe they are plotting to tie him to a hospital of his own. Many people lean on him; they "clamor" for him, Mercibel says, and she has worked for him a good deal; I suppose she knows. One need not clamor, and one may not lean, but I do feel grateful to Robert. Now that I am getting better, Marion is ailing; the doctor thinks this delicacy of her throat needs careful attention, and I am sure he gives it. Dr. Curtis tells me to trust her entirely to Dr. Hazelton, and that he has not

his superior among the young physicians of the State.

It is difficult to believe that Robert was ever a lover and suitor of mine. I have quite forgotten it, and I am sure he has. I wish he *would* marry Minnie Curtis.

I wonder if Dana has written to Minnie? She does not mention it. I think she would if he had. I have written to Dana to-day. The doctor offered to mail it for me direct from the post-office on his way down-town, that it might catch the outgoing steamer. I wish I did not find it so hard to write naturally to my husband; but I think that my embarrassment grows worse and worse. I feel so bruised all the time; it is as if he had beaten me — my soul is black. And he never raised his hand against me in my life. Mercibel tells me that husbands sometimes do such things. And he was often very angry with me — God knows why.

I am glad he never did that. I should have taken the baby and gone out of the house forever. I can't say that I should not have wished I had n't, but I should have gone; I am quite sure of that, for I am so constituted. I am called a tender woman; but there is a shield of implacability in me, steel, deep down beneath my satin. If there were not, I think I should be dead.

One day the doctor said to me in quite a casual way:

"Did you have occasion to notice any marked nervous irritability in Mr. Herwin before he went to Uruguay — say the last six months?"

"Why do you ask?" I suggested.

"I am answered," said Robert. He bent over the powders which he was folding collectedly; his profile was as impersonal as a symbolic medallion.

"You will take these," he said, "one dry on the tongue every night. You will give Marion the others, in six tablespoonfuls of water, one teaspoonful every two hours."

He rose, snapping the elastic on his medicine-case, and his lips parted. I saw that he would have spoken. In fact, he left without another word.

December the twentieth.

To-day the doctor said abruptly:

"Write to your husband often; and — pardon me — write as kindly as you can."

I sat staring. Robert has never spoken so to me before. I was inclined to resent his words; but it would have been impossible to resent his manner. This is something so fine and compassionate that I do not know how to qualify it. Mercibel calls it his oxygen. "That is what

they clamor for," she says, "an invigoration that can be breathed. Every patient feels the same about him."

I wonder if Fanny wanted me to understand that the doctor had no particular manner reserved for myself? She need not have undergone any anxieties. She does not know that Robert and I meet like two spirits, having left all personal relations far behind us in an old, forgotten world.

SENT

"*January the third.*

"My dear Husband: I have not been quite strong enough to write you any details before now, and I knew that Dr. Hazelton had cabled you, though I did not know it until several days afterward. I shall hear from you soon, no doubt.

"I had been over to see Father rather late that evening, and had carried him our little presents, Marion's and mine, and he kissed me good night three times, and blessed me, and said:

"'Daughter, you have never given me one hour's anxiety; you have been nothing but a comfort to me from the first moment that they laid you in my arms.'

"In the morning, in the Christmas morning, while it was quite gray and early, Luella waked

me, and said that the doctor was down-stairs and wished to see me for a moment. Even then I did not understand; I thought perhaps he was called away on some long case, or out-of-town consultation, and had come to leave directions about Marion,— for he takes such care of Marion as I am sure you will be grateful to him for,— and I dressed and hurried down, stupidly.

"Robert was standing in the middle of the library, and when I saw his face I said:

"'Something has happened to Father! I will go right over.'

"I started, and pushed open the front door, and out into the snow, for it had stormed (and the banshee had cried as she does in storms) all night. James had not begun to shovel the paths, and it was pretty deep. But before I had waded in I felt myself held strongly back by the shoulders, and the doctor said:

"'Do not go, Marna. There is nothing you can do — nor I.'

"Ellen had found him at six o'clock, 'looking that happy,' she says. And the doctor got there in a few minutes, but he is sure that nobody could have saved Father. It was an embolism in brain or heart, they think.

"We buried him beside Mother, on the third day of Christmas week. Of course I knew you

could not get here, and I tried not to think of it. He left a sealed letter for you. Shall I send it on? Or would you rather wait?

"You will forgive a short note, for I have not been quite well, and there are many cares and perplexities to be met.

"Your affectionate wife,

"MARNA."

UNSENT

Undated.

"MY DARLING: I know you do not realize what I am undergoing, and I tell myself so every moment, lest I should lose myself and think hardly of you. I say: 'It was so sudden that he could not come, and now that it is over, why should he come?' It is true I long for you so that it seems as if I could not live. But I do not like to tell you so. I am not used to bearing so much quite alone. I never had a real bereavement before — I see now that I never did. I think if I could creep into your arms, and hear you say, 'Poor little wife!' that I could cry. I find it impossible to cry.

"I begin to understand for the first time something of what people mean when they say: 'It was easiest for him, but hardest for us.' All those truisms of grief and consolation have never had meaning for me; in truth, I don't think I have

respected them — the uncandid prattle about resignation, the religious phraseology made to do duty for honest anguish. But now I think of all the old human expedients enviously. Perhaps if I had been a devout woman I might know how to bear this better. Do you think I should? Dana, it sometimes comes to me, on long nights when I cannot sleep, to ask myself, with the terrible frankness of vigil, whether, if you and I had been what are called religious people, we should have found marriage any less a mystery — for us, I mean; any easier to adapt ourselves to. There may be something in the trained sense of duty, something — who knows? — in that old idea of sacrifice, in the putting aside of one's own exacting personality, in the yielding of lower to higher laws. Do you suppose that the Christian idea can come to the rescue of the love idea? I do not know. I am teaching Marion to say her prayers. I hope you will not mind?

"Dana, Dana, I love you! Sometimes I wish I did not; but I do. I cannot help it. I must be honest and tell you; sometimes I try to help it. I think that I must stop loving you or die; and I grope about for something to take the place of loving you, some interest that I could tolerate, any diversion or occupation, some little

passing comfort, the kindness of other people to me, something to 'keep me from sinking down.'

"Your lonely and your loving

"MARNA."

SENT

"*January the fifteenth.*

"MY DEAR HUSBAND: You will be notified, of course, in the proper way by Father's lawyers, but I am sure you should hear it first from me. The property is found to be in a strange condition — depleted, Dr. Hazelton calls it. There are some shrunken investments, and there has been some mismanagement at the factories since he has been obliged to delegate everything so to other men, who have not proved conscientious. Then there are those lawsuits about his patent on the linen thread — you know you used to take a good deal of that off his hands; but lately I think he has been wronged somehow, and was too feeble to right himself. At all events, something like a couple of hundred thousand is swept away. And, in fact, my inheritance will prove so small that I am thinking seriously of renting the old place. Do you object? I have only Father's friends to take counsel of, and Mr. Gray advises me to do this, decidedly.

"Please reply by next steamer.

"Your affectionate WIFE."

CABLE MESSAGE

"*January* 20.

"*Herwin, United States Consulate,*
"*Montevideo, Uruguay.*

"Drs. Curtis and Hazelton wish Father's house sanatorium. Twenty years' lease. Cable reply.

"MARNA."

SENT

"*January the twenty-fifth.*

"MY DEAR DANA: Your cable came after a little delay. I suppose you may have been out of town? We do not altogether understand it, but I fancy that happens with the cable. It seems clear, however, that you interpose no objections, and, not knowing anything better to do, I have closed with the sanatorium offer for the old place. I think I would gladly be in Uruguay if I need not see my decision carried into effect. I have put the whole affair into Mr. Mellenway's hands, so that there shall be no blunder.

"It seems this sanatorium idea has long been a fad of Dr. Curtis's and a dream of Robert's; and the other day that rich old man Pendleton, whom Robert has kept alive for years, surrendered his ghost and his will. Everything goes absolutely to Robert to support a private hospital after his own unrestricted pleasure. Robert

says it is such an opportunity as some men in his profession would give their lives for. Dr. Curtis is to be the figurehead, but Dr. Hazelton will be in virtual control, being resident superintendent, but with a staff of subordinates which will permit him to retain portions of his private practice. Otherwise, Fanny says, his clientèle would rise and mob him. If I *must* see anybody in the old house, I would rather it were friends than strangers. I am trying to mold my mind to it without grumbling. I think there is this about the great troubles — they teach us the art of cheerfulness; whereas the small ones cultivate the industry of discontent. I hope you will be pleased with what I have done. You see, Dana, that what I have of Mother's has dwindled with the rest, and, I suppose, for the same reason. I hated to have to tell you, but really, Dear, I don't see just how we could get along if I did not rent the place.

"Thank you for your last letter. If they were a little longer sometimes, I could feel that I could form a better idea of your life. You seem as far from me as if you swung in a purple star upon a frosty night — at the end of dark miles measured by billions in mid-space. But I am

"Loyally your wife,

"MARNA.

"P.S. Marion is becoming dangerously pretty, and your eyes grow older in her every day. She sends her love to Pity Popper, and commands that you kiss Dombey, distinctly omitting Banny Doodle, who is, at this writing, head down in the umbrella-rack, by way of punishment for invisible offenses. Last Monday Banny Doodle was saved by old Ellen, at the brink of fate, from being scornfully run through the clothes-wringer.

"Ellen has asked my permission to spend the winter with me, refusing any wages. Thank you for the last draft. I shall use it as wisely as I can, and I am learning to live economically, because I must. We have given up the telephone."

May the twenty-fifth.

It is one of the days that make one believe that everything is coming out right in some world, and might do so in this one if the weather would last. Showers of sunshine drench the brightest grass, the mistiest leaf, I think I ever saw. The apple-tree is snowing pearl and coral upon the tree-house. (If Dana could see it, I should be quite happy.) The world is one bud, blossoming to a faithful sky.

Marion is out six hours of every blue-and-gold day with Job and Ellen, who, between them, spoil the child artistically. After her hard win-

ter, the baby herself seems but a May-flower, a pink, sweet May-flower, opening in a shady place. If it had not been for the doctor — well, if it had not been for the doctor, I cannot think what would have happened, or what would yet happen. I cannot, now, imagine myself without him. He who saves her child's life recreates a mother.

The old home and the new sanatorium are wedded more comfortably than I should have thought possible; and I have outgrown the first pangs of jealousy. They call it the Pendleton, as if it were an apartment-house. The patients are not so many yet, of course, as to be disturbing, and the whole thing moves on rubber-tired wheels. Mercibel has a permanent position there.

It is said that all sanatoriums, or such institutions, are replicas of their superintendents. About this one there is a certain gentle cheerfulness, a subtle invigoration, which is Dr. Robert all over again. He is the soul of his hospital.

I have noticed that the preoccupations of very busy men do service as apologies for neglect of friendly claims to an extent which is deified in the spirit of our day, like a scientific error, or any other false cult. I, who have no claim upon this overworked man, either of his seeking, or

of my wishing, or of the world's providing, am touched by a thoughtfulness which I have no right to exact and no reason to expect. When I think of the intricacies which have resulted in the simple circumstance that my father's house has become a private hospital, I must feel that the hand of mercy has remembered me.

Once when Father was calling on Whittier at Amesbury, Mr. Whittier said: "I wish I had thee for a neighbor." I have often wished I had a neighbor, a soul-neighbor who was a house-neighbor. I never had before.

All this cruel winter my old friend has befriended and defended me from every harm between which and myself he could, by any ingenuity of the heart, interpose his indefatigable tenderness.

I choose the word, but I do not give it the lower translations. He has taught me what few women learn, what fewer men can teach, that there is such a thing as trustworthy tenderness. I might almost call it impersonal tenderness. Language does not betray it; expression does not weaken it. It is as firm as the protection of a spirit, and as safe. Swept into the desert of desolation as I am, something upholds me, that I do not perish. Is it mirage, or is it miracle? There is a marvel which many women dream of

but do not overtake — the friendly kindness of a strong, good man.

May the twenty-seventh.

No letter has come yet from Dana. It is now three weeks since I have heard. Once, in the winter, it was four.

"I would keep on writing," the doctor says. How did he know that I had not? Sometimes it seems to me as if I could drop into the unfathomable silences, and at other times as if I must. Dana's letters are no more natural, I perceive, than mine. Some of them are curiously involved and elaborate, and others are one dash of the pen, like a tongue of fire that may reach anything or nothing.

He writes so frostily in one letter that my heart freezes; and in the next I find a kind of piteous affectionateness before which I melt and weep.

He has ceased to speak of making a home for me in Montevideo. At first he wrote about hotels and the discomforts of housekeeping — about the spiders and lizards. After that he said that the climate would not do for Marion, and that there was no doctor in the whole blanked country to whom I would be willing to trust the child. There is a certain something in his let-

ters which perplexes me. I showed one of them in April to Robert.

"Do not resent this," he said. "Be patient; be gentle."

He walked across the room, and returned.

"As if," he added, "you were ever anything else!" I could have thought that his grieving lip was tremulous. He has a delicate mouth; but it is stronger than most delicate things, and never betrays him.

Did I once think him a plain person? At times his strong, unostentatious face assumes transfigurations. There have been moments in my desperate and desolate life this year when he has looked to me like one of the sons of God.

How manifold may be the simplest, sanest feeling! I cherish in my soul two gratitudes — that of the patient, and that of the mother — to this kind, wise man. I might add a third: the thankfulness of an old friend for a new loyalty. To-day the doctor said to me, quite incidentally: "The next time you write to Mr. Herwin, pray tell him that I suggested that he should hunt up that medicine-case, and take atropine 3^{x} twice daily."

"What for? Malaria?" I asked.

"I think you said he complained of malaria," replied Dr. Hazelton.

June the first.

MARION had one of her feverish turns last night, and Ellen went for the doctor. It was a warm, soft night, and we had only candle-light in the room. I use Robert's candlestick a good deal for sickness; it holds an English candle that burns all night.

When he had stirred Marion's medicine, and covered the tumbler in his conscientious way, he nodded at the gold candlestick.

"You keep it well polished," he said, smiling.

"It has proved a faithful compass," I answered, smiling too. "I believe they don't always, do they? I heard the other day of a wreck on the coast of Norway which was caused by the deflection of the needle."

"Yes," said the doctor, "I read that. It was attributed to a magnetic rock. There really are such, I think, though they are rare." He began to talk about the coast of Norway with more interest, I thought, than the subject called for. It was as if he deflected my mind from the compass. I felt a trifle hurt, and a certain pugnacity into which I lapse now and then (and for which I am generally sorry) befell me. I took the compass up and shook it. The candle flared out.

I lighted it again as quickly as I could, for the baby complained that I had "grown it dark" and she could not see "her doctor." He watched the needle mounting steadily.

"See!" I cried, "the candle went out. But the compass holds true. The needle points due north, Doctor."

"And always will," he answered solemnly. In the vague light, and moving away from me as he was, for he had risen abruptly to end his call, his strong features were molded by massive shadows. Even in stature he seemed to change before my eyes, and to grow tall, as figures do that one sees in a fog.

June the fifteenth.

DANA's letter has come at last. It is a very strange letter. He offers no explanation of his silence, no apology for the neglect. He writes with a certain vagueness which is almost too impalpable to be called cold, and yet which chills me to the soul, like a mist when the sun is down. He sends his love to Marion, and I am to remember him to the doctor. He is glad I am in such good medical hands. He mentions again that there is not a decent doctor in that country, and adds that he does not think the climate agrees with him, that he was fooled on the cli-

mate, and that the whole blanked nation is a malaria microbe. He incloses a draft (a small one), and inquires whether I had not better have the telephone put in again; in fact, he makes a particular request of it. I wonder why his mind should fasten on this, the only detail about my life which has seemed, for some time, to take a very distinct form to his imagination, or even to his recollection.

I handed the letter to the doctor. Although I hesitated about troubling him, I did not hesitate about the letter. There is seldom anything now in my husband's letters which I could not show to another person, unless, indeed, I should not for the very reason that I could. Now and then some sharp word or phrase pierces the soft, elaborate surface,—some expression like a stone, or a tool, which did not take the frost-work, or from which a clouded sun has melted it,—but for the most part Dana has ceased to be cross to me. Sometimes I wish he were. I read a story once of a poor woman who fled and hid herself from her husband (but he was one of the brutes), and, being illuminated by repentance, he sought and found her. His first expression of endearment was a volley of oaths. "The familiar profanity," so ran the tale, "reassured the wife. She nestled to him in ecstasy."

There is something in Dana's excessive and courteous good nature which troubles me.

Dr. Robert read this letter slowly. I had the ill manners to watch his face boldly while he did so. It was inscrutable. He folded the letter and handed it back without a word.

To-day Mercibel brought me this note from him — the first that Robert has written me since those old days in the other world where I was dear to him. It is a comfort to know that I am so no longer, and I am sure he has forgotten that I ever was. I am quite ashamed of myself that I recall it. Women have relentless memories about the men who have once loved and honored them; I think they cherish these tender ghosts of experience after a man himself has virtually forgotten them.

I fasten in the doctor's note:

"My dear Mrs. Herwin: I have given the matter some thought, and I suggest that you have your telephone reconnected, as your husband seems to wish it. I do not know that my reasons for the advice are so definite to myself that I can very well make them clear to you; but, in fact, I urge it.

"Sincerely yours,

"Robert Hazelton.

"*Later.*

"P.S. I am called out of town on a distant consultation, and expect you and Marion will both keep quite well till I return. I shall be gone till day after to-morrow. In case of any sudden need, my first assistant, Dr. Packard, will do excellently, if Dr. Curtis should not be able to come to you. Dr. Packard has access to my case-books and Marion's remedies.

"I have taken the liberty of asking the telephone people to call and receive your orders this afternoon. It may save you some trouble."

I am ashamed to say that my discreditable impulse was to refuse to see the telephone manager when he came; for once I was a girl of what is called spirit, and certainly Robert has taken upon himself—

What? What *can* the doctor take upon himself but a thankless and uneased burden, a neglected woman and her ailing child? What can he take upon himself but sacrifices without hopes, duty without comfort? What shall I take upon myself but the ashes of repentance? I am not worthy of such high comradeship.

I have ordered the telephone put in again.

"My dear Doctor: I send this to let you know at once on your return that I have obeyed

you. The wire will be reconnected by Sunday, and I shall send my first message by way of that old and reëstablished friend — if I may? — to yourself.

"I do not find it easy to express my sense of obligation to you, but I find it harder not to do so.

"I have been everything that is burdensome and trying, and you have been everything that is kind and wise and strong. I have been all care and no comfort; believe that I understand that, even though I do not seem to. You are always nobly giving, and I am always pitiably receiving, some unselfish, friendly service. Sometimes I feel ashamed to allow you to be so considerate of my child and of myself; and then I am ashamed that I have been ashamed; for God knows we have needed you, Marion and I. What would have befallen us without you I do not find myself able to imagine. I often try to explain to my husband, when I write him, all that you have done and been and are to us.

"Far better than I can ever do, he will acknowledge your faithful kindness when he returns to us, and to himself. Oh, Robert! do you think he ever will? I am

"Your grateful patient and
your sincere friend,
"Marna Herwin."

July the fifth.

YESTERDAY I was really ill. I think it was the terrible weather (of course I miss the sea), and something that troubles me, and the loss of sleep caused by the excess of patriotism on our street; in fact, this has lasted five nights, culminating on the night of the third. The doctor says that his patients, some of whom are of the nervous species, have suffered to such an extent that he is prepared to wish the American nation had remained in a colonial condition. He divided the entire night between his sick people and the ruffians on the street, for the private guard that he had provided proved incompetent to cope with them. Once, in the night, I heard footsteps outside my cottage, and looking out, I saw the doctor's patrolman softly pacing around our house. Nothing has been said to me about this, and I have not told him that I know it; but the tears smarted to my eyes — that little act of thoughtful care was so divinely like him.

As I write, Ellen is singing to Marion in the nursery:

His loving kindness,
Loving ki-ind-ness,
Lov-ing ki-i-*ind*-ness, oh, how great!

Every time that Ellen strikes a high note Job barks. Ellen is a musical Methodist, and Job,

I have always maintained, is a Unitarian. I think Job misses his master's singing. The piano has been mute, now, nearly a year; I have never touched it since he left. Ours has become the home of the unsung songs.

I am writing on in this preposterous way because something has happened. It would be easier to record any histrionic episode, any thrilling incident of fate or of fiction, than the intangible circumstance which I wish to enter upon this candid page.

What (I think I have said before) are the plots of event before those of feeling? They seem to me inartistic and dull.

I, who live — more quietly than most of my class and my years — the secluded life of a New England lady; who play only the poor rôle of the slighted wife, not even dramatically deserted; I, who have not the splendors of a great tragedy to throw high lights upon my gray story — I, too, experience drama.

How shall I maintain my untaught part upon this stage of the spirit? For me it confuses more than if I were a woman of the world. I perceive that I am not representative of my day, that, young as I am, I belong to an elder time: I am an anachronism. For I am a woman of the home, and the homing nature has sheltered me. Mme. de Staël, when she was dying, said:

"I have loved God, my father, and liberty." I have loved my father, my husband, and my child. Now every thought is a spectator in this, to me, uneducated action; every hope, every feeling, every nerve, is an actor. My nature seems to be taxed with a new and imperious expression of itself. Am I appointed to some solitary scene, some thrilling monologue, where duty and desolation are at war?

When the doctor was called to-day, he seemed distressed at finding me more ill than he had supposed, though, really, I think it was what many physicians would have dismissed as a nervous attack, and disregarded. He said at once:

"Did you have a letter yesterday?"

"I did not sleep," I answered; "the boys in the street —"

"Yes, yes, I know. Can I see the letter?"

"I think not — this time, Doctor."

"Very well. Any news in it?"

"None. About the same thing."

"It is not necessary for me to know details. What I must know is, has there been an emotional strain? It makes a difference with the prescription. Your pulse is not quite as firm as it ought to be. You were grieved at something? You need give me no particulars —"

He turned to prepare his powders, and neither

of us spoke. Marion did the talking; she trotted up to my lounge, and asked when Pity Popper would come home.

"You are to sleep, no matter how much trouble it takes to keep the house still," the doctor said peremptorily. "I will give orders to the servants myself as I go down. Ellen shall take the child over to Mrs. Freer for a few hours. I will ring and direct this."

He rang, and Ellen came, and Marion went. The doctor went on folding powders calmly. I turned my face upon the sofa-pillow, and closed my eyes. I had on one of my thin white gowns, and the lace at my throat stirred with my breath, and tickled my cheek a little, so that it annoyed me, and I started quickly to brush it away.

The suddenness of the motion took him unawares, and my eyes unexpectedly surprised his. He had finished folding powders, and sat looking at me, thinking that I would not see, believing that I would not know, perhaps — God grant it! — himself not knowing how it was with him.

It all passed like a captured illusion, which escaped, and refused to be overtaken. The soul of the man retreated to its own place, and the lens of the physician's guarded eyes passed

swiftly before his. The defense was something so subtle but so instantaneous as to be superb. I honored him for it from my heart.

But, ah me, ah me! Some other man, some stranger, some new friend, might perplex me, but not this one. For I had seen Robert look like that — how long ago! — when he was free to love me, and I to be beloved.

July the sixth.

I SAID that something had happened. What? The lifting of an eyelash, the foray of a soul. Nothing more. Yet am I hurled by the movement of the drama.

To-day Dr. Packard came to make the professional call. He reported Dr. Hazelton as excessively busy, and summoned off on a consultation by an early train. How haggard Robert looked that last time he was here! He had slept less than any of us. His eyes had the insomniac brilliance and the insomniac honesty. I do not think I even told him that I was sorry for him. The omission taunts me now that I cannot see him.

SENT

"*July the seventh.*

"MY DEAR HUSBAND: Your last letter hurt me, but I will not dwell on that. I am sure that

you must have felt truly ill to write just as you did, and I am distressed and anxious. I cannot think that the climate agrees with you, as you say. Your intimation that you may not serve out a much longer term in the consulate would have given me pleasure but for — you know what. There seems to be always a lost bolt in the machinery of human happiness. As you say, the mill never turns with the water that is passed. New currents sweep the whirling wheel, and new forces start the life and fill the heart.

"Marion is well, and I am better.

"Your affectionate wife,

"MARNA HERWIN.

"P.S. No; I do not mind that gossip about you. I would not stoop. I could no more believe it than I would believe it of myself. Give yourself no concern on that score. Whatever else may happen, you are incapable of *that*.

"I cannot deny that it wounds me that I am not in a position to defy the world and the worst with my confidence in my husband — my ultimate confidence burning deep in the dimness where the great elements of character are forged. But of this we need not speak. Let it suffice that I trust you, Dana.

"And, Dear, I have sometimes thought that was

a wicked proverb. It may not be the same water that turns the mill, but it is the same stream, Dana."

July the eighth.

To-day the doctor came. He has resumed himself altogether. Except for a sheen of his transparent pallor, he was much as usual — cheerful, quiet, strong. He made a strictly professional call, and it was brief. He regretted that he did not find me better, and I protested that I was quite well; and we talked of the weather, and of Marion, and of the climate of Uruguay, which, it seems, bears an excellent reputation.

He left a new remedy, and rose to go. Swiftly my common sense deserted me, and I lapsed into one of the lunacies for which sick women, above the remainder of our race, are, I believe, distinguished. In point of fact, I felt physically weak enough to cry my soul out, and leave it for the doctor to pick up and put back — as if one dropped a bracelet, or a flower. It seemed to me a laudable evidence of self-restraint that I should only say:

"Why did you send Dr. Packard? I missed you, Robert."

"Did you?" he asked gently. He took my hand with ineffable tenderness and delicacy, and

then he laid it down upon the folds of my white dress.

"I think you are right," he said quietly. "It was not very brave. I do not mean that you shall miss me too much—nor—"

The sentence broke. His eyes said: "Nor do I mean that you shall need me too much, either." But his lips said nothing at all.

UNSENT (ADDRESSED, STAMPED, AND HELD OVER)

Undated.

"DANA! Dana! Come back to me! I fling my pride to the stars; I never had any too much of it, so far as you are concerned, my dear,—not since the day you made the Wilderness Girl your prisoner,—and I clasp you with my heart, and cling to you. Do not stay away too long, not *too* long! Do not push the risks of separation too far, I do entreat you. I am a young wife, Dana, not used to solitude and care, and I never was neglected in my life before—and you know I don't bear loneliness as well as some women do. I thought I was a constant woman, and I think so. But I cannot answer for myself, Dana, if this should last, if I should be tried too cruelly. There is an invisible line in a woman's nature of the existence of which I begin, for the first time, to be aware. Once crossed, I perceive

that all the powers and principalities of love cannot recross it. I have often thought it must be the final anguish if I should be compelled to admit to my own soul that you had ceased to love me. Dana, there is a finality worse than that. If I should cease to love *you* — then God help us both! Everything is mine as long as love is. I sacredly believe that anything may be ours as long as I love you. Hope can live as long as love does. I could be so tender to you — yet. I could be so patient, and try so hard to make you happy — yet.

"There have been times (I wrote you so, candidly) when I have tried not to love you, in very self-defense. I commit that spiritual gaucherie no more. Now I summon my love, and cherish it, like some precious escaping bird, lest it evade me. Ah, help me to cage it, Dana! You only can.

"Did you ever think what it means to be a desolate woman, to sit alone every day and all the evenings? Do you understand how far a little kindness goes to a lonely wife — thoughtfulness, unselfishness — the being remembered and cared for? Did you never put the question to yourself — No; I know you never did. And I say you never shall.

"Dana, I ask you to come home. It is the

first time, you will bear witness to me. And I cannot tell you all the reasons why I do. Indeed, I do not think I understand them quite myself. But I think you would respect them, and I must tell you that I shall not ask again.

"Loyally and longingly,

"MARNA, your Wife.

July the tenth.

I THOUGHT I would go out myself, to-night, and post that letter in the old box that has stood for years on the elm at the opening of the governor's avenue; it was put there by way of honoring my father and making his large mail easier for him to deal with.

It is a hot night, and there is a burning moon. I ran across the lawn with Job, as I used to do, as if I still had the right, not coming very near to the Pendleton Hospital; but I could see it quite plainly — the patients on the piazzas, the lights in the long dining-room windows and in the library, which is the doctor's office now. He was sitting at his desk, absorbed and busy. I ran on to mail my letter. When I got to the box, I changed my mind, and thought I would not do it. So I came back slowly, by the avenue, meaning to cut athwart the shrubbery and come out by the tree-house quite unnoticed, for I felt

as if all the moonlight of the world were concentrating on my organdie; white dresses do give one that impression on moonlit nights.

When I reached the tree-house the doctor was walking slowly up the garden path, between the July flowers. He had one of his patients with him, a deaf old lady who is gifted with fits.

"I ain't had but six to-day," she announced.

Now Job does not like that old lady, and he has acquired an unfortunate tendency to take her by the hem of her dress and spin her round. As I turned to anticipate Job in this too evident intention, I dropped my letter. The doctor picked it up and handed it to me.

"You did not mail it," he said.

"I decided not to, Doctor."

"Why?"

When I made no answer, his face settled sternly.

"Wait a moment, Mrs. Herwin," he commanded in his professional voice. "I shall return directly."

"And only seven yesterday," put in the old lady.

"Doctor," I said, "she will have sixteen if Job plays top with her in his present frame of mind. I can't manage him much longer." For Job was barking, and wriggling out of his collar to get at the old lady.

Smiling indulgently, the doctor drew his patient away, and Job and I went up into the tree-house to wait for him, and the large moon regarded me solemnly through the vines. "Not here," I thought, "not *here!*" For I remembered Dana. So I came down from the tree-house, and went into my own home, and Job went with me. In a few minutes Robert came in, knocking lightly on the open door, and waiting for no answer. He did not sit down, but began at once:

"Tell me, why did you not mail that letter to your husband?"

"Tell me why you ask."

He sighed, and turned.

"I know I seem to presume," he said wearily. "But I thought you would forgive me, Marna. And I had the feeling — of course I may be wrong — that the letter had better go. Anything that comes from your heart — anything that could do any good —"

He did not finish his sentence, but abruptly left me. I went to the door, and watched his sturdy figure quickly crossing the lawn and the hospital grounds, till it disappeared in the sacred shadows of my father's house. I waited till he had been gone awhile, and then ran out with Job and mailed my letter.

VI

July the thirtieth.

HEATED seven times, the days pass through the furnace. Only the nights are possible, and one lies awake much to realize the fact. Really, I find them more merciful than they often are in this terrible month. While the moon lived they were solemn and unreal, like the nights of an unknown planet in which one was a chance visitor. My brain burned, my head swam; I thought strange thoughts and felt new emotions, and was an alien to myself. Now that the moon is dead, there is a singular quality in the darkness; it creeps on compassionately, like delicate and tender feeling, shielding one from the fiery trouble of the obscured sun. I long for the dark, and when it comes I feel as if it were a cool hand, and I lay my cheek upon it, and am quieted and comforted — no, I am not comforted. I have not heard from Dana for eighteen days.

I read somewhere in a society novel, once,

of a husband and wife who could not live together, and she smiled and said:

"Dear Bertie is on a yacht."

But after a good while "people began to think that yachting trip had lasted rather long." I wonder if people think that Uruguay is lasting rather long? But I am astonished at my fixed indifference to that sort of sting; what I endure is so much more important than any one else's view of what I endure. Married man and woman are a universe to themselves. Other persons look small to me, and quite distant, as if they were the inhabitants of a different solar system.

The telephone people have changed our number. It is now 26—6, and went, I believe, into the new book.

August the fifth.

MARION'S head hangs like a sun-smitten flower, for the first dog-days are cruel to her, and the doctor has been to see her every day for nearly a week. She is better for the tireless attention which he never fails to give her, and she has grown very fond of him; he, I think, of her. I found him to-day with the child on his lap, and Dombey in his arms; Banny Doodle suspended head first from his necktie, which had been untied and retied for the purpose (who can fathom the mental process which leads my daughter

systematically to deny to this unfortunate doll the right to stand upon its feet?); and Job was crawling up his back. Job was engaged, I think, in the noble purpose of rescuing Banny Doodle. Job is attached to the doctor, but not devotedly so. If the truth were known, I think Job misses his master, though he would not admit it for a pound of chops. The doctor is not the master, and the master instinct in the dog is stronger than his affections or inclinations. I have found him several times, lately, sleeping on a glove or a slipper of Dana's. I think Job's jealousy of my husband has yielded to a sense of anxiety about him. We are all growing a little anxious. The doctor's eyes ask every day, and he telephoned me last evening to know if I had heard.

What would become of me without Robert? He never forgets, he never fails, he never neglects. He carries my hapless lot as if it were a shield that he might be brought home dead upon and not regret it. He guards me, he comforts me, he "keeps me from sinking down." He counts himself out; he never thinks of his own ease, of the burden that I am, of the price that I may cost him.

I am not worthy of this chivalry. I always knew that Robert was a gentleman,— and, after

all, there are none too many,—but now I perceive him to be a Knight of the Sacred Circle where honor and tenderness are one quality. He is faithful to "the highest when he sees it," because that is his nature, and he can trust himself to his nature; and I—I can trust him.

I write to Dana sometimes how kind Robert is to us, and I have tried to explain to my husband precisely how I feel about the doctor. I think Robert is very much troubled about Dana's long silence. To-day I took him unawares and asked him quite quickly:

"Have *you* written to Mr. Herwin?"

His face took on its transparent look, whitening visibly, but otherwise he showed no emotion, and certainly nothing that could be called embarrassment.

"Why the question, Mrs. Herwin?"

"Don't you wish me to ask it, Dr. Hazelton?"

"It is your right, of course. But—no—I do not wish it."

"Very well, Doctor. I will not ask it again."

He got up and paced the room, with his hands in his pockets, and went to the window. The blinds were closed and the light smote through, and I saw the man as I did once before, standing in a gleaming stream with the sun-

motes whirling about his head. He wheeled unexpectedly.

"I will not confuse you. I have not written to your husband. But if I should ever see occasion to do so, I wish to take the liberty without being questioned."

"Take it," I said. I held out my hands toward him. "It is an unrestricted deed."

"You are quite sure that you trust me?" he asked, with just a perceptible catch in his breath. Then I said:

"I would trust you, Robert, to the uttermost ends of fate." And so I would. Who in all my life has proved trustworthy, if not this old friend? Only my dear dead father; no one else. As I write, the candle is lighted by Marion's crib, and I can see the compass pointing north. There is something about this effect of gold and candlelight that I wish I knew how to explain to myself — I mean the sense of rest that it gives me. It melts upon the nerve like late sunlight upon green branches, or firelight upon happiness. And yet that is not what I wish to say. I am losing my power to express beautiful thoughts, so many tragic ones devour me. Is the sense of beauty meant only for the young, the inexperienced, and the happy? I have always thought it was safer for the old and the sad.

August the sixth.

I USED to dream incessantly about Dana. At first there was scarcely a night that was not cruel with him; then it would happen for three or four together, with spaces of mercy between. He was generally in some trouble — ill, or in prison, or lost. There is one Uruguay swamp which I think must be on the map, I know it so by heart: it has palmettos, and yucca-bushes, and seven cypress-trees in the foreground; there is an old bright-green log with a viper on it, coiled (he wrote me about one called *vivora de la cruz* because it had marks like a cross on its head). Dana stands at the end of the log, the end which dips into the water; he stretches out his hands to me, and the log sinks, and then the snake springs.

There is a prison in that country, somewhere, barred with iron crosses at the windows, and he comes to the window of his dungeon,— he is far below the ground,— and lifts his arms, and I can see his fingers and enough of his left hand to recognize his wedding-ring. But I cannot see his face, and I wake calling, "Dana!"

Then there were dreams when I saw his face, and woke to wish I had not. It was turned quite fully to me, and it was dark and offended.

I cannot say that it was his freezing face, but he was always inscrutably displeased with me. Sometimes he retreated from me across a wide country, and I — for I would not pursue him — stood with vast spaces between us, and wrung my hands. At other times I could hear him calling me repeatedly and anxiously, but I could not see him at all. Thrice I lay staring and sleepless all night, and at two o'clock I heard his voice distinctly in my room. "Marna? *Marna?*" he said loudly.

Once I had a dear dream, and cried for joy of it. I thought he came home and in at the door suddenly, and ran his hand through his dark curls, and said in his old way:

"Marna, what a darn fool I was to leave you! I can't stand it any longer." I never had this dream except that one time; and he took me to his heart, in the dream, and he cried out: "Have I been too sure you would forgive me?" Then he found my lips, although I would have denied them (for my heart was sore with its long hurt), and he said: "This is the kiss that lives."

I do not dream of Dana so often lately. I think I am rather glad of this, because the dreams lasted for days, and I was ill as long as they lasted.

August the seventh.

MINNIE CURTIS came over to-day, and asked what I heard from my husband. He was quite well, I said, by the last letter. I thought she regarded me with a certain pity, expressed in her blonde way, without the complexion of reserve, and I wondered why it did not annoy me. Only yesterday the doctor said to me:

"The strongest trait in your character is your indifference to inferior minds."

"Some one has been talking," I said at once. "Not about —" I stopped, for I felt ashamed to have begun, and the color smote my face.

"Don't be foolish, Marna," replied the doctor, gently. "Spare yourself. I shall take care of all that."

"Some one has been talking about Uruguay," I finished.

"I am glad you mind it so little," he returned in his comfortable, comforting tone.

"Doctor," I demanded, "when your patients are on the operating-table, would they mind a wasp? Or a hornet?"

The doctor smiled: "I cannot say that I remember ever to have seen an insect of the species, or any other, in an operating-room."

"You have said it," I maintained. "They are never admitted."

When Minnie got up to go, she went over to the piano and began brushing the music about. I never knew a girl with Minnie's nose who was not, somewhere in sensibility, a defective.

"Ah," she said, "the 'Bedouin Love-Song'?" She drummed a few chords of the prelude. Then indeed I rose upon Minnie Curtis. I think I actually took her by the shoulder, rather hard, and I know that I pushed her hand back.

"You will not touch that music, if you please. I do not like it disturbed."

Minnie colored and stared.

"You don't mean to say—" she began.

In point of fact, Dana's music remains just as he left it the last time he sang and played to me. I never allow any person to touch it, for any reason, and Luella and Ellen are forbidden to dust the piano. But even Minnie Curtis's nose was equal to the situation. She did not finish her sentence.

When she had gone, I sat and eyed the music.

> I love thee, I love but thee!
> With a love that shall not die!

I whirled the piano-stool, which still spun with Minnie's retreated figure, and hid my face upon the rack. Thus and then I thought—and I

record that I thought it for the first time in my life:

A man selects whom he pleases, and wins her if he can; he slights the object of his love when he will, and ceases to love when he chooses. A woman's choice is among her choosers, and she is denied the terrible advantage of the right to woo. Why should eternal tenderness be expected of the more disabled, the less elective feeling? Why should the life everlasting be demanded of a woman's love? I had got so far when Marion came up and pecked at my muslin dress (it was the old May-flower dress that her father used to like), and said something about Pity Popper; so I took her in my lap and kissed her hair, and I wished that I could cry.

When I looked up, the doctor was standing in the middle of the room. I do not know how long he had been there. He glanced at the music on the rack.

"I am not going to use my horses this afternoon," he said, prosaically enough. "I have ordered James to come over and take you and Marion to drive at four o'clock, when it cools a little. You need the air."

He did not suggest that he drive with us, but left me, smiling gently. I do not think I even thanked him. But Marion ran and offered him

Dombey to kiss. This fact was the more impressive because she had just fed Dombey on raspberries and cream.

August the tenth.

Oh, at last! . . . Dana's letters came yesterday—three of them, stalled somewhere; whether in the mails, or in his pockets, or on his desk, who can say? He used to keep letters over sometimes, and I would find them in such queer places—once I found two in the umbrella-rack.

I say "he used to" as if my husband were dead. In all separations there are the elements of eternity; and in every farewell to the being we love we set foot upon an undug grave.

Dana writes quite definitely and kindly. "I shall resign the consulship," he says. "You may expect me home this fall. I have had enough of it. I am convinced that the climate does not agree with me, and, in fact, I am not very well." He sends more love than usual to Marion, and his grateful regards to the doctor, to whom I am to set forth the fact that he is taking atropine 3^{x}. He adds a postscript:

"I have been thinking how patient you were with me when I had that devil of a grippe. You were a dear old girl, Marna. A fellow misses his home in a blank of a country like this. When I get better shall you want me back?"

SENT

"*August the tenth.*

"My dear Husband: Your letters were so long delayed that we all had begun to be anxious. I do not think I will try to tell you how I felt when Ellen brought them in yesterday and laid them on my lap. There was war on her old face — tears and smiles. In my heart, too, were battling forces. Between anxiety and joy, between my hurt and my love, I was rent. I had waited a good while for these letters, Dana.

"Shall I want you back? Try me and see! I hurry this off by the outgoing steamer to tell you what an empty home waits for you how longingly, and what a

"Loyal, loving

"Wife.

"P.S. Marion is better, thanks to the doctor; she has not been at all well lately. I will write at more length to-night about her, and about whatever I think will interest you. This note goes only to hold out the arms of

"Your Marna."

August the eleventh.

To-day the doctor came, and I showed him Dana's letters. I had, of course, telephoned the

news to him yesterday, as soon as I received it, and he came in shining. One would have thought it was his own happiness, not mine, that was in the question. He had a high expression.

"I did not dare to hope for so much," he said joyously, "nor quite so soon."

"At least," I sobbed (for I could not help it), "he is alive. He had been silent so long, I had begun to — suffer, Doctor. And I did not want to cable and make myself troublesome to him."

Something in Robert's face or manner perplexed me, and I said abruptly:

"You have been writing to him!"

"I have not written to Mr. Herwin."

"Cabled, then?"

"Nor cabled."

"You might as well tell me what you *have* done. I think I ought to know."

"You were so kind as to say that you trusted me."

"And I do! I do! Never mind, Doctor."

"But I do mind, and I will tell you. I took steps to learn if he were still at the consulate. Of course I did this very quietly — and suitably."

"How long ago?"

"Three weeks."

"You did not tell me."

"I did not think it would make you any — happier, on the whole."

"Have you ever done this before?"

He hesitated. "It is not the first time, I admit. I want you to feel that I shall do whatever is necessary and best for — you —"

"Robert," I tried to say, "you are a good man. I bless you from my heart."

"I receive," he said, "the benediction."

He bowed his head and stood beside me quite silently; and before I could think what I should say, he was gone.

August the twentieth.

It is on record that the fakirs really do live buried for forty days, and are reanimated. It is with me as if I had held my breath since the seventh of October last, and now began to inhale — feebly, for the long asphyxia. Now that I know I need not suffer, I scarcely know how to be happy. In the morning I wake and think: "It will soon be over." At night I fall asleep saying something that perhaps religious people would call a prayer. I have not learned to pray, for I am not yet religious: I am only disillusioned with the irreligious. I find that paganism has not helped perceptibly in that form of fate which has been appointed to me. "After

all," I say, "there is a God, and He is merciful." And then I sleep — long, blessed nights. Anything can be borne, I think, if one sleeps, even joy.

The days have wings. They fly from me like strange birds lost on their way from some tropical country. There are forest fires somewhere, and here the August air is impearled with haze, or smoke, or both. There is an unreal light all the time. The sun sinks like a burning ship in a sullen sea, and if there were a moon, she would be the ghost of a lovely mermaid diving. I feel excited every minute, as if — God knows what — would befall. I suppose it is because I am so happy.

"Try to be calmer," said Mercibel, to-day. "It is quite unnecessary to wreck yourself."

"Mercibel," I demanded, "have you seen me shed a tear? Or do any foolish thing?"

"If I had," retorted Mercibel, dimpling, "I might have spared myself any comments on the subject." I can see that she watches me furtively.

So does the doctor. No; the adverb is misplaced: I never saw Robert do a furtive thing. Rather should I say that he guards me quite openly. I think he has caused it to be generally known that my husband will soon be at

home. He took us to ride yesterday, Marion and me; it is the first time that he has done so. He looks a little pale, but every recurrence of feeling on his face is receptive, as if he reflected my happiness. He has borne my troubles so long and so uncomplainingly, how glad I am to lighten his load! I wish I could be merrier. I am conscious of trying to express the expected amount of gladness for the doctor's sake. It is remarkable how rigid the emotions grow when they have set in certain attitudes too long.

August the thirty-first.

We are very happy. Dana's letters come more regularly than they did, and I reply frequently and comfortably; I find myself much more at ease in writing to my husband. He tells me to expect him when his year's service is over, if not, indeed, before, and that he will soon be able to be more definite. The neighbors (including Minnie Curtis) come in and wish me joy, and some old friends who have had the delicacy to keep silent while I have been filling the rôle of the neglected wife hasten to share my relief from the position, and particularly to congratulate me in that I did not accompany my husband to Montevideo. "The child made it impossible," they say politely.

Marion talks incessantly about Pity Popper, and orders for a new bicycle-suit have been issued in Dombey's behalf, while Job is destined to a Yale-blue plush ulster; but Banny Doodle, whose wedding-dress is as gray and dim as an outlived honeymoon, is to have nothing at all — unless the clothes-wringer, a dark fate on the teeth of which this hapless doll is forever clutched. "Tell Ellen sqush her frough!" commands my daughter, contemptuously. Mercibel asked me to-day, with some embarrassment, if I did not think I needed some new dresses myself. I had not thought of it. I believe I have not had a new gown since Dana left. I compromised with Mercibel upon a long white cape to catch up and run about the grounds in.

A lady told me once that she never in her life had ordered a black street-dress but that there was a death in the family, and she had given up black street-dresses.

I wonder, if I instituted a new ruby house-gown, if Dana would come home any sooner? Or if we should be any happier when he did come? Colors are forces, I think, and their power lies among the subtleties and the sorceries. Who knows where it begins or ends? If the heart of the wife is in the ruby jewel, the arms

of the wife are in the ruby velvet. . . . Shall I extend them?

My old gown is quite crushed and paled; it has a grieved look. Why do I hesitate to have more wife velvet? Why is it so difficult to renew a faded rapture? And is it a duty? Or a sacrilege?

"You are looking tired," the doctor said today; "we must have a better color before Mr. Herwin comes." He talks a good deal about Mr. Herwin's coming. He seems to think of it all the time. He is so kind to Marion and to me that I can but dwell on his kindness continually. It runs through my happiness — a comfort within a hope — like a thread of silver twisted with a thread of gold. The other evening I ran out with Job about the grounds, and I saw the doctor's shadow on the shades of his office window; he was sitting at his desk, with his face bowed on his hands, and he looked to me (in the shadow) a lonely man. It occurs to me that it is rather noble in Robert to be so happy in my happiness. So was he grieved in my grieving; so was he broken on my rack.

Sometimes it seems to me that he shelters my joy as if it were a faint flame that a rude wind might blow out — as if he put his hand around it carefully.

SENT

"*September the third.*

"DANA MY DEAR: I hurry this — it is but a postscript to my letter — to say that I am beginning to dream of you again (I have not lately), and that last night I had the dearest dream that ever a wife had of her husband in the dream-history of separated married people. I thought you came home sooner than we expected you, and hurried in, and said — But when you come home I shall tell you all about it, if you will care to hear. I shall not forget it. Some dreams are more real than facts, I find, so I treasure this for you. I am treasuring much. I am preserving my power to be happy (for that is a faculty which weakens rapidly with disuse), and am flinging off my experience of suffering. I am forgetting that you have hurt me, and remembering that you are coming to me. I am forgetting that we have ever failed to make each other happy, and I am thinking that we loved each other dearly. And, Dear, I began to write this only to tell you that I have begun to count the days. I think you will sail on the 17th of October; don't you? And that is forty-and-four days.

"And I am four-and-forty times your waiting

"WIFE."

September the fifth.

Last night I dreamed again of Dana, and I write it out to rid me of it. It was a composite dream, and worse than any. There was the log and the swamp, the seven cypresses and the yucca, and the viper; the coil, the spring, and the fall; and there were the bars of crosses, and the dungeon, and his uplifted hand with the wedding-ring. And there was always his dark, offended face.

Then he came home, in the dream, and he was — as he used to be before he went away; and he spoke and he did — as he used to speak and do. And, oh, it all happened all over again! My husband was not kind to me — he was not kind!

Sunday.

I went to church to-day with Marion. They sang: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." . . . What if, when he comes back, it should be just the same? Will the ice in his nature solidify? Or the fire of it melt? It is a war of the elements. It is a strange thing when a wife must say: "I know no more than any other woman, any chance acquaintance, what my husband will do, how his character will express itself."

September the tenth.

And yet we are very happy. It is as if the bow of pain had bent, and the arrow of joy were flying to its mark. We live in a kind of exaltation. I can see my excitement reflected in every face — Mercibel's, Marion's, Ellen's, and, most sensitively of all, in Job's; more unerringly than any person, Job knows when I am glad or sad.

The doctor's sympathy is a fact by itself, something apart from that of other friends. It is like the atmosphere, or the law of gravitation. I breathe it, and I stand upon it. What was I writing the other day about elements? There is elemental peace as well as elemental war.

I am young and well (as women go), and I inherit physical health, but I think, as I look back on the closing record of this year, that if it had not been for Robert I might have died.

I told him so this evening.

"Do not overestimate that," he said quickly. We were sitting on the piazza, for there is a warm starlight, and he had come over to see if I had heard any news from Dana.

"It would not be possible," I persisted, "to tell you, Robert, how I feel about what you have done for me — the kindness, the care, the trouble you have taken for us — the obligation —"

Ellen, from the nursery above, where she was putting Marion to bed, began to sing shrilly:

His loving ki-i-*ind*-ness, oh, how great!

"Listen!" I said, laughing, and I held up my hand. It was my left hand, and the moon blazed upon my wedding-ring. I crossed my hands in my lap, and my betrothal ruby flared before my eyes and his, a gleam of crimson fire. The doctor did not speak, and I sat and watched the ruby — of all colors the glorious, the rapturous, burning deep down to the heart.

"It is chilly for you here," said the doctor. "You will come indoors." He did not speak quite naturally, though quietly and firmly, as he always does. He rose, and stood for me to pass in at the door.

"Are n't you coming in?" I cried. I felt disappointed; I am alone so much, and it is such a comfort to me to see my old friends — I have not too many. No; I will be quite candid: it is a comfort to me to see the doctor. How could I help that? How could I? If I ought, I would. And I should be willing to show him my whole heart and all that is therein, and I am sure he knows that, too. I have not a thought nor a feeling that I should be uncomfortable to

have him see, and when Dana comes I shall tell them all to Dana — every one.

"I don't think I will come in to-night," replied the doctor. "My patients —" He paused.

"How is the old lady?" I demanded. "How many has she had to-day?"

"Only two. I should soon discharge her, but she does n't want to go." He laughed. . . . That laugh seemed to clear the air of I know not what, and I know not why.

"There!" I said. "You see for yourself it is much better to come in. Your patients are all quite comfortable just now. There is not one of them who needs you as much as I."

Hesitating perceptibly, he came in. There was a fire laid on the library hearth, and he took a match and lighted it. The blaze leaped and struck him in the face. . . . I was shocked at its expression.

"I have hurt you!" I managed to say.

"Child," he faltered, "you cannot help it."

"— I wish to change Marion's medicine," he hastened to add in his usual voice, "while I am here. Will you ring for a glass? Or shall I?"

I rang, and Luella brought the tumbler, and the doctor prepared the medicine silently. He had not sat down, and I pushed a chair toward him; he did not appear to see it.

"Two teaspoonfuls once in four hours, if you please, Mrs. Herwin." His tone was quite professional, and the muscles of his face had stiffened; I perceived that he did not mean to stay — perhaps, God knows, that he did not dare. . . . Then swiftly it seemed to me as if I could have gone up and sat at his feet and put my head on his knee — like Marion — and cried; and I thought how he would have put his hand on my head and comforted me — as he does the child. And I was not ashamed that I thought it; but I did not tell him my thoughts. I opened my lips to say: "Don't go, Doctor!" and I closed them. I should be glad to remember that I did not say it, only that I am afraid I said a thing less kind, more weak. For everything that I had ever read and heard about friendships that people may have — men and women, right women, good men — came crowding to my mind. Once I thought it impossible that I could experience friendship, or need it, after I married Dana: now, to-night, I remembered all that haughtiness of happiness and that bigotry of inexperience with a kind of scorn of myself, for I perceived that I am more pitiable, needing friendship, than I was happy, having love. My head swam a little, and Dr. Hazelton's face seemed to blur and recede from me like a countenance

within a cloud, so exalted was the man's look.

"Doctor!" I cried, "what is *this?* . . . Is it friendship, Robert?"

Then across his eyes there passed the sacred war which no woman, witnessing, could forget: for she would reverence the man and do him obeisance in her soul forever, because his knew no reproach, as it had known no fear; and because the affection with which he had honored her was a matter to be proud of, and nobler for, and better for, as long as she should live, or he.

"Call it friendship, child," said Robert, not quite steadily. "It is a good word, safe and strong, and it is respected of God and men."

"It is quite a true word, too," he added more distinctly — "for you, Marna." His eyes did not evade me, but met mine wistfully and straight; they were as remote and as mournful as the eyes of some higher being set to watch the sealed tomb of a lower life. He spoke more quickly: "We must be honest with ourselves in everything . . . you and I. And very careful. I try to be!"

"I know you do! I know you are!" I cried. "God bless you, Robert!"

He held out his hand; it was cold. I put

mine into it, trembling; for I felt afraid — but not of him.

September the thirteenth.

WHO was it who wrote that "God bless you!" was equal to a kiss? Sterne, I think. But what could Sterne know of the holy war? the sacred victories? the high nature of a man like this? the soul of a desolate woman, saved from despair because she had been understood, and guarded, too?

September the fifteenth.

WHERE did I track that ballad about the skipper's daughter?

> ". . . a man might sail to hell in your companie."
> "Why not to Heaven?" quo' she. . . .

It has doubled, and is hunting me down.

September the twentieth.

THERE is no letter from Dana. And it is our wedding-day. What a freak of fate that a woman should try to forget her wedding-day! The doctor has not been over to-day at all.

September the twenty-first.

THIS morning very early, at half-past eight, the doctor came. He walked in without ringing,

and called me, in a low voice, from the foot of the stairs. I ran down, and Marion and Job came tumbling after. The doctor detained the child gently, that she should not follow us into the library; but Job slid in. Then Robert shut the door, and *then* I saw the cold autumn morning light full upon my old friend's face.

"Dana is dead!" I cried.

"No—no—*no!*" he gasped. "It is only—this."

He held out a cablegram; his hand shook more than mine. I read it, and folded it, handing it, without speaking, to the doctor, who extended his fingers to take it back. This was the despatch:

"*To Dr. Hazelton.*

"Sail Saturday San Francisco. Advised voyage round Cape for health. Have written. Tell my wife. HERWIN."

I could not see quite clearly for a little, and I got to the Morris chair and put my head back. Job jumped into my lap and began to kiss me, whining as he did so. It was so dark about me that still I could not see any object in the room except the face of the Yorkshire, and I clung to my dog; I think I said: "*You* love me, Job, at any rate!" but I am not sure. I did not think

about Marion, nor about any person. It was as if I were a girl again, and had only Job. I believe I said: "Father! I want my father!" but I cannot tell; and then I suppose the doctor caught me and lifted me, for I felt that I was slipping sidewise to the floor.

. . . When my head cleared and the room had lightened, I was on the lounge. Mercibel was doing something to my clothes, and rubbing my feet; the doctor had my hands in his, and warmed them gently; there was brandy on the table, and his medicine-case. As I turned, he drew my little girl between us, and put her in my arms. Marion began to babble: "Pity Popper!" Then my voice came to me, and broke upon me, overcoming me against my will. I am afraid I said:

"Oh, pity *Mommer*, Marion! Pity *Mommer!*"

No one spoke in answer to me. In the stillness I heard the dog whining. They had put him down, and he crawled back upon the lounge, and made his way to my neck, and clung there and kissed me with compassionate rapture — my truest and most helpless friend.

September the twenty-second.

I WRITE, that I may endure: for it helps me to do so — it always did; I am thus created. To-day

the doctor suffered me to talk of what has happened, though he would not yesterday; but now I am much stronger, and stiller, for I will not break under this broadside, nor will I be shamed by it to my own soul.

"You have gained perceptibly since last evening," he began in his usual voice. "You are brave."

"I am the veriest coward who ever was selected to stand under heavy fire," I protested. "The only thing is that I know it, and so don't run."

"That is the way the best soldiers are made," replied the doctor, smiling sadly.

"Run I *will* not — from *this*," I said. "It is a battle to the death now. There is one thing on which he has not counted — the roused pride of a tender woman. The powder was belated," I added, "and it is smokeless, Doctor; but it will do some execution yet." Something in my voice seemed to wring his heart.

"Marna!" he entreated me, "*Marna*, don't!"

"Robert," I demanded, "tell me the holy truth. Nothing less and nothing else will serve me now. . . . *Has my husband deserted me?*" He had now quite regained himself. His averted profile did not betray him; it was gray and pinched, but it is often so. He turned his head and looked me nobly in the eye.

"I will not deceive you," he said. "It may be so. *I do not know.*"

"Believe the best," he added in his reasonably cheerful voice, "until your letter comes. There is to be a letter yet."

I said: "Oh, is there?" I had forgotten all about the letter.

October the first.

And once I was writing notes to ghosts — my mother, who ceased from me when I was a little girl, and pretty Ina, dead in her teens. There are no ghost letters on these pages now. Life has accepted my manuscript, and edited it sternly, drawing his dele-mark through all the fantasies.

And yet, I think if I could see my father for one moment — perhaps he would find a way to help me. He always did; he was full to the brim of love-inventions. And if he came in at the door and said, "Now, Daughter —" I should expect the miracle. In the last few days I think I have prayed to my father.

If Dana should never come in at the door again — there is no letter yet. I have come to regard the door as an enemy, as something forced between us, and I have stolen down for several nights and drawn the bolts, and slept with the house unlocked.

October the third.

THE letter has come. I suppose it is what I should expect, and yet I cannot say that it is. He sets forth the fact that he has not been well, and that the only doctor he could get hold of in that blanked country who seems to possess a dose of sense ordered the sea-voyage. He takes a coasting steamer, by name the *Marion*. He will cable from San Francisco, and I am to write to the hotel whose name he gives me. He is sorry to disappoint me, and I shall hear from him as often as possible. He cannot yet set a date for his return, but hopes that it will not be long delayed. He sends his love to the baby, and his regards to the doctor, to whom I am to express my husband's warmest gratitude for the faithful care which has been given to the family. The letter reads like a copy-book with broken sentences; there are several such, and the whole thing is a reluctant medley. There is not a genuine word in it from beginning to end. He adds that he is glad to leave a country where there are two thousand species of insects and where the spiders are as large as — something that I could not make out.

Later.

A SCRAP from Dana's letter fell when I opened the envelope,—I suppose I was confused and

excited,—and it wavered away and dropped somewhere. Job has just found it and brought it to me, wagging joyously. When I read the scrap, I kissed Job and blessed him, for this is it:

"P.S. You 're a sweet old girl, Marna. For God's sake, think as well of me as you can."

October the fourth.

I SHOWED the letter to the doctor, for I felt that I had better.

"Is this all?" he asked.

"There is a postscript," I admitted. "I do not know whether to show it to you or not."

"Have you written?" he persisted.

"No."

"Cabled?"

"No."

"Are n't you going to do either? or both?"

"I have not made up my mind."

"Let me see the postscript," he replied authoritatively.

I unfastened it from this page and showed it to him, and pinned it back again in its place. Neither of us spoke. The doctor went to the window in that way he has, and stood with his hands in his pockets, looking out—a sturdy

figure, all man, from his strong head to his firm foot. I wondered that I had ever called him "too short," and that I used to think him plain.

"You stand between me and despair," I thought. But the thing I said was:

"Robert, what shall I do?"

"Give me time," he answered patiently; "I must think." He left me without looking at me.

October the fifth.

To-DAY he came again, and began at once:

"Mrs. Herwin, I have come to say that I do not know how to advise you. This situation has passed beyond me. It has passed from the ordinary to the extraordinary perplexity. I am afraid. . . . I am sorry to seem to fail you!" He broke suddenly.

"There is a point," he hurried on, "where the third soul cannot trespass. Your tragedy has reached that point. It may not remain there: it may take on new phases . . . something where I can be of use again. If I can — you know you will not have to ask."

I said something — I don't know what — half inarticulate; but he spoke again, before I had finished:

"Just now I think only your own heart can counsel you. Follow it. I can give you no

other advice to-day. When I have considered the matter further I may have more to say. For the present, do not depend upon my judgment, but upon your own instincts."

As he moved to leave me, a shaft of sunlight which his figure had interrupted fell across the hair of my little daughter, who, running in, had sprung upon me and at that moment laid her face upon my lap. I put out my hand to smooth her curls,— her father's curls,— and the ruby on my finger received the light deep to the core of the splendor.

"It is the heart of the wife," I thought.

Yet at that moment — so perplexed am I, so torn and troubled — it seemed to me that if the doctor left me so I should perish of my bewildered desolation. And I did utter these weak and bitter words:

"I am sorry to have been so troublesome to you."

He wheeled as if I had smitten him.

"I think, Mrs. Herwin, I have deserved to be better understood by you than that."

Then indeed I followed the counsel of my heart, for it urged me, and I cried out:

"Forgive me, Robert! . . . I am so wretched! . . . I have nobody but you! . . ."

I got up to put Marion out of the room, for it was no sight for her, to see her mother weep-

ing — and I could not have helped it if I had been slain for it. I shut the door, and put my head on the top of the Morris chair, and, so standing, I cried and cried.

And then I heard from between the teeth of my old friend these five half-strangled words:

"Good God! How *could* he?"

I do not think he knew I heard them, and I hope he did not. I motioned him to leave me, and he did so instantly. I did not see his face, for I did not lift my own.

October the tenth.

THERE have been burglars about us lately, and the neighborhood is uneasy. I wonder why I am not? A burglar is such a small trouble! I have scarcely seen the doctor for almost a week, and although I have been really ill with I don't know what, I have not summoned him. To-day Mercibel came over, and ran back, and sent him immediately. He was so entirely himself that he put me at my ease at once. Neither of us alluded to the circumstances of his last call. He prepared his powders, gave me some quiet professional advice, and rose to go. Then, quite naturally, as he has been in the habit of speaking, he observed:

"Have you cabled?"

"No."

"Written?"

"No, Doctor."

"Are you going to?"

"I have not made up my mind. Of course he is at sea now. Is there any hurry?"

He did not reply.

"If this is desertion —" I began.

"And if it is not?" interrupted the doctor, quickly.

"Robert," I said, "if you knew anything about Dana that I did n't — should you tell me?"

"Perhaps not."

"And yet, if I needed to know, if I ought to know —"

"Have you ceased to trust me, Marna?" Robert asked.

I held out my hand. He took it, laid it down, and looked at me.

"You may not have all the perplexity," he said gently. "I am trying to do the best I can."

"If the worst were true, if he means — this," I insisted, "would you have me pursue him?"

A terrible gleam flickered in Robert's eyes, but his pale lips were locked.

"And if the worst were not true — if there were some reason, something that I do not understand —"

"Consider this possible," he interrupted, more

impetuously than he is apt to speak; "in making your decision, allow for such a margin. . . . If I *knew*, I should be able to counsel you. I cannot advise you on a working hypothesis. As the thing stands at this crisis, I would rather trust your heart than my head."

"Child," he added, "remember that I am not — unwilling to do — anything. I have a good deal to consider . . . not for myself . . . but for you, Marna."

Then he fell upon the phrase that he had used before:

"We must do — God help us! — the best we can."

November the tenth.

WHERE is that cataract which spends itself before it becomes spray and falls, so great the height from which it leaps? Nothing but mist reaches the ground.

What shall a woman do with the current of a feeling fixed at too far a height, and dashing over to its own destruction in too deep a gulf? My love is a spent cataract, wasted in mid-air. Last night I waked suddenly and found myself saying: "I wish I had never seen my husband's face." I have never said that before. It is as if I had blasphemed for the first time in my life. I quiver with it yet. When I

slept again, I waked again, and that time I was saying:

> Oh, each man kills the thing he loves; . . .
> The brave man does it with a sword,
> The coward with a kiss.

I have not heard from Dana. The doctor asked me two weeks ago if I had written, and I said: "Only that once." I kept a copy of the letter, as I have — I wonder why — of several letters (but not all) that I have written him since he went to South America.

SENT

"My dear Dana: I try to write, as you asked, but my pen is dumb. What would you have me say? If a 'man would kill the thing he loves,' he smites to slay, he does not torture. If you would tear the tie between us — be a man and tell me so. There is, I think, a circle of fate where a woman's love will parley with neglect no more. Mine has reached that invisible circumference. It used to be eternal growth and motion, like the ripples of the ether, when a sacred word has been spoken, widening on and out forever. Now, everywhere that I turn I meet the boundary; and I must say that I am afraid to measure it, lest I should perceive that

it is narrowing. Are you playing with your own soul or with my tenderness? Be candid with me, for your own sake, for the child's, and for mine. MARNA.

"P.S. Dana! Dana! You ask me to think the best I can of you. Then tell me what to think, I pray you, Dear. Are you sick? I would come to you anywhere, anyhow — and, oh, I would cherish you still. Are you in any trouble? I would share it to the uttermost pang. Have you done anything wrong, Dana? I would be the first to forgive it, to forget it. I would help you to put it behind you, to bear the consequences, no matter what they are or might become. Trust me, Dana. Confide in me — even now. Tell me the worst, and I will believe the best. Share with me your trouble — I don't care what it is — even if it is the trouble of ceasing to love me. Let us meet that misery together as once we met love together, and help each other to bear it as best we can, because we chose each other, and you did love me, and I am Your WIFE."

There has been no answer to this letter. The spray of the cataract turns sleet, and I can imagine that in time there might a glacier form in the gulf below.

I can see that the doctor grows anxious. He has ceased to ask me whether I have written to my husband. Nor do I longer question him. I can see that Mercibel pities me. I thought I was fond of Mercibel, but now I do not like to have her near me very often. I do not care to see any person, — I wince at every point of human contact, — yet I cannot show it. I am like an animal fixed in a torture-trough by experimenters. My house has become my world. I see my servants, my child, and the doctor. He does not come as often as he did. I perceive that even he is affected by the position I am in, and that, in fact, I can take no natural hold on life anywhere. Robert is very careful. The Knight of the Sacred Circle makes no weak mistakes. Yet I feel from my soul that my fate bears upon his continually. I may be wrong, — a desolate woman is apt to lose her sense of proportion in measuring her effect upon a man who cares for her at all, — but it seems to me as if my old friend did not forget me for an hour. And when he does come — oh, God bless him! God bless him as I never can, but as I would, and I am not afraid or ashamed to say so! I would so bless him, if I could, that he should be happier, having my friendship, than he could be

having the love of any gladder, freer woman in the world.

I wish that I could tell him so.

November the twelfth.

He came to-day, and I tried to tell him; it seemed to me as if I must—as if I owed so great a debt to his chivalry, and his pure and high affection, that the least I could do was to express as much as that to him. Why, I could say it before all the world! But he forbade me by a gentle motion of the hand.

"Hush, Marna. You need not explain it. I understand."

"It is true," he added, as if he had really understood the very words upon which he sealed my lips. "I do feel in that way. And I am happier — as it is — than I could be . . ."

"You need not explain, either," I interrupted, smiling. "I, too, can understand."

We shook hands and parted quietly. His presence remains for a long while after he has visibly left me. I read the other day:

> It is easy to throw off a hand of flesh, but not the clasp of a human soul.

Everything comes to the spirit at last, I find.

Might there be some subtle and sacred advantage reserved for that which begins with the spirit and does not descend?

Love is like God, omnipotent, immutable, inscrutable, and they that worship it must worship it in spirit and in truth.

Next to God, the best thing is a true-hearted and high-minded friend.

November the fifteenth.

MARION was taken suddenly last night with one of her croupy throats (she is entirely relieved to-day), and Ellen telephoned for the doctor. It was half-past two. He got over on the wings of the wind, and lavished himself upon the baby for an hour; nor did he speak to me at all, except to give me professional orders. When the child was relieved, he asked me to step downstairs for a moment. We stood together in the hall. There was no light except from the compass-candle, which I had carried down; it had a gentle flame.

"I found the front door unlocked," he began with abrupt severity. "You had sent Ellen to draw the bolts for me, I presume?"

"No, Doctor."

"Was it intentionally unlocked?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"Why?"

"I cannot explain why. I . . . feel happier so."

"Since when?"

"Oh, for quite a while, I think. It seems as if I *could* not lock it. I tried."

"This has been so since your husband cabled last?"

"Yes, Robert."

"Don't you know that it is positively unsafe — for yourself, your family? You must know that the autumn burglaries in the suburbs have been worse this year. You are as liable to have trouble as any one else, and you are — quite unprotected."

"We sleep with all our bedrooms bolted, Doctor — thoroughly."

"You should sleep with your front door locked and bolted after this."

I made no reply.

"Will you do so, Mrs. Herwin?"

"No, Dr. Hazelton."

"Why not, Marna?"

"I cannot bolt that door, Robert."

"Very well," said the doctor; "I shall send over a man to sleep here after this — one of my

nurses. I can spare Eliot, just now, perfectly well; he is on day duty, and likely to be. He is entirely trustworthy, and too well trained to ask for reasons why. You will make up the sofa-bed for him in the library, if you please. He will come over to-morrow night at ten o'clock."

I offered no protest,— indeed, it did not occur to me till to-day that I could,— and the doctor left without another word. As he opened the front door, the wind puffed out the compass-candle and left me staring.

"What should I do without it?" I thought as I groped up-stairs in the dark.

November the sixteenth.

ELIOT came over at ten o'clock last night, and disappeared from public life in the library sofa-bed. I slid down and unbolted the front door, as usual, and slept as I have not done for weeks — not listening, nor quivering. Eliot is so used to watching that he would stir at any sound.

November the seventeenth.

TO-DAY the doctor found me grappling with the shipping news — a feeble self-delusion. I never knew there was any before, and I might as well be turned afloat on the stock-market. He took

the paper from my hand. In his eyes I saw unfathomable compassion.

"I will attend to all that," he said.

"If there should be any wreck?" I whispered.

"There is no wreck," answered Robert. "The *Marion* has arrived in port quite safely."

"How long have you known this?" I asked, when my head ceased whirling.

"About two weeks."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"Would it have done any good? been any easier? I tried to choose the lesser pang for you."

There was nothing to be said. I felt that the misery in my eyes leaned upon the chivalry in his too utterly, too heavily. I turned my face away.

November the twentieth.

Tolstoi says that people should marry in the same way as they die—"only when they cannot do otherwise."

In the main condition of civilized human happiness, is there a terrible structural fault? Is the flaw in the institution of marriage itself? Or is it in the individual?

Why did Dana find it impossible to be happy on the terms of married life? Other men are. . . . But *are* they? Is society dancing under a white satin mask — the sob or the grimace

beneath? Is my lot only more crudely or vulgarly expressed than others selected from the general experience — a cry instead of a satire? Dana loved me — madly once, dearly afterward. Why did not the dearness remain when the madness had gone? Must a man cease to value because he has won? Is this a racial trait? Or Dana's trait? Am I meeting the personal misery? or the fate of my sex? Why, when I endured so much, could he bear so little? How, when I cherished, could he neglect? Why, when my tenderness clung, could his unclasp?

Once I was a proud girl. Plainly I should never have become a loving wife. That was a mistranslation of nature. It was the Descent of Woman. If this which has befallen me is *Man*, not *Dana*, then some woman of us should lift her voice and warn the women of the world what woe awaits them in the subterfuge of love. Now I remember my dream — how I sat in the amphitheater and saw myself and Dana on the stage, and blamed myself for the excessive part that I played in my tragedy, and the house rose upon me, for it was serried of women, and they said: "You are ours, and of us, forever"; and I cried out upon them: "Then womanhood and manhood are at civil war!"

Why does a woman trust herself to love or to her lover? Friendship is the safer as it is the saner thing.

If it is *Man*, not *Dana* — what then, I say? It is conceivable that the time might come when the Princess in the great Medley of Life should make no feint of battle,—to be beaten, poor girl, by all the military laws,— but in some later, wiser day should gather her forces, and order her heralds, and proclaim the evolution of her will: "We give you all that history has taught us you can be trusted with — our friendship, sirs. For the rest, we do reserve ourselves."

There is no word from Dana, yet, of any kind. Every one has ceased to speak to me about my husband.

November the twenty-fourth.

Last night a strange thing happened. It was pretty late, as much as half-past eleven, and Eliot had come in and was asleep (or he says he was) in the sofa-bed. I had not slept at all. The telephone called sharply — I think it was twenty-five minutes to twelve, for the compass-candle showed my watch as I sprang. I got into my old ruby negligée and ran. Eliot, in his nurse's dressing-gown, stood tall and lank in the hall. He had the receiver at his ear. As I flew down the stairs he was saying:

"26—6? Yes, this is 26—6."

. . . . . .

"Mrs. Herwin's? Yes. This is Mrs. Herwin's house. Yes, she is at home — yes. I will call her."

. . . . . .

"Yes; Mrs. Herwin is coming. Hold the wire."

I took the receiver from his hand, and he stepped back. I motioned to him to return to the library. He did so, and I think he shut the door. I said:

"Who wishes Mrs. Herwin?"

There was no reply. I repeated my question, more loudly and quite distinctly; but there was no answer. In a kind of nervous fright I rang the Central peremptorily. The night operator, stupid with sleep, was inclined to view the summons in the light of a personal offense.

"You 've cut me off!" I cried. "Give me my message."

The night operator made some inarticulate answer — Dana would have called it actionable. He said the baby used actionable language when she cried.

"Please give me my message!" I pleaded. "It may be very important. I must have that message. Oh, *do* give me my message!"

"Great Scott!" said the night operator. The night was windy and cold, and the wires sang wildly. As I stood waiting, the noise deepened; it was as if the electric forces pitted themselves against me, that I should not have the message. I threw the whole power of my voice upon them:

"Who wants Mrs. Herwin? Here she is. *I am here*," I repeated clearly.

Faint, far, infinitely far, jarred and jagged, like a cry coming from a falling star, it seemed to me as if a voice replied. But what it said I could not hear—I do not know. The rage of the wires increased. I called till I was spent. The electric protest, as if hurled from a mighty throat, grew into a roar. It was now impossible to communicate even with our own exchange. The cold drops started upon me—I do not know why. I experienced a kind of supernatural fear.

The library door opened and the nurse stepped out.

"Come away, Mrs. Herwin," said Eliot, suddenly. "It is of no use. I will call the doctor."

"You can't," I protested; "the wires won't work. Listen to that roar! Horrible!" I put the receiver to his ear.

"It does sound ugly," admitted Eliot. He

was now dressed, and he put on his hat to go for the doctor.

"Go back to bed," I said peremptorily. "There is nothing in the world that the doctor can do. Why should you rouse that tired man? Tell him in the morning."

"I am not your patient," I maintained, when the nurse hesitated; "I am your hostess. Go back to bed, Mr. Eliot."

With no more words, he went. I crawled upstairs, and lay staring till dawn. The white electric light of the street-lamp that I have always loved, and Dana used to like, flooded the lonely room. The telephone wires raved on the roof of the house, and the banshee suddenly joined them.

November the twenty-fifth.

The doctor was disturbed by the telephone story, but he would not discuss it with me. He and Eliot have been in some sort of consultation, and it is my opinion that Robert went in person to the exchange to-day. It did not occur to me to do as much — I am so used to the doctor's thinking of everything.

"Have you found out where the message came from?" I asked him suddenly.

He shook his head. I was so sure, however, he had heard something, that I insisted:

"What was it, Robert?"

"It was a long-distance call," he said.

There was no repetition of the call last night.

November the twenty-seventh.

LAST night at half-past twelve — I had not slept, but was lying in my old red gown, all ready for any summons — the telephone called again, and again I ran.

This time I was in advance of Eliot; in fact, the nurse seemed to have slept through the ringing of the call-bell, at which I was surprised; he did not come out of the library, and I answered the call myself.

The night was as mute as eternity, and the wires were clear and calm. Again, as before, a distant operator asked:

"Is this 26 — 6?"

"This is 26 — 6."

"Mrs. Herwin's house?"

"It is Mrs. Herwin's house."

"I wish to speak with Mrs. Herwin."

"I am Mrs. Herwin."

A clumsy silence intervened. Then I heard the distant operator say:

"Here 's your party. Why don't you speak up?"

A faint voice feebly uttered an indeterminate sound.

"Who wants Mrs. Herwin? *Oh, who are you?*" I cried.

The unsuccessful articulation struggled and fell feebly from the wire. The distant operator took offense.

"Why don't you talk, now you 've got your party? You 've got no more voice than a ghost. Speak up, man, in Heaven's name! Can't? . . . Mrs. Herwin, the party can't talk. He can't be heard. And he won't talk through me. He seems to be an obstinate party — he —"

The distant operator's voice died down. I called, I rang, I threatened, I pleaded. The message was cut off as utterly as the voices of the dead.

The receiver shook so in my hand that I could not hang it up, and while I was fumbling to do so I felt it taken from me. I said: "Thank you, Eliot." But it was not Eliot. Ashen and stiff, the doctor's face regarded mine.

"Am I too late?" he asked hoarsely. "Eliot did as well as he could. It took time. Let me come, Mrs. Herwin."

As I stepped aside for him to take my place at the telephone, I perceived the impassive face of the nurse; he was shutting the library door to go back to his sofa-bed. What orders had

"'LET ME COME, MRS. HERWIN.'"

he received and (I must say admirably) executed?

To leave me to answer the call-bell? To slip out of the window and summon the doctor?

Peremptorily, in the professional tone, this order came:

"Mrs. Herwin, go into the parlor and lie down on the sofa till I call you."

I obeyed. The doctor stood at the telephone a long time. Fragments of what he was saying fell, but I did not try to gather them. I knew everything would be right, everything would be done, now that he was there. Presently he hung up the receiver and came into the dark room; he had the compass-candle in his hand.

"I have learned where the call came from," he said in a matter-of-fact tone — as if it were hardly worth speaking of.

I sprang.

"From a town in Minnesota," proceeded Robert, quietly. "The name is Healer — one of those queer Western names."

I tried to speak, but I do not think I succeeded. I believe I meant to ask if he thought it were a real town, and my dry lips stupidly struggled with the words: "I never heard of such a place"— as if that fact bore upon the case at all.

"I happen to have some professional know-

ledge of the village," observed the doctor, "though that does n't amount to much. It is near St. Paul — this side. St. Paul is about as far as the telephone goes."

Then I cried out upon him:

"Oh, is there no way? Can't you find out *any*thing more?"

"I have done my best," said Robert, patiently.

VII

December the first.

THERE have been no more telephonic mysteries; the call-bell hangs mute all night. I think Eliot has been ordered to sleep with his door open. Only the banshee parts her lips, and there are times when she wails from bedtime till breakfast; usually this happens with a west wind. The doctor is absorbed, and the horizontal lines of anxiety in his forehead are heavily carved. I cannot make out what he is thinking, for I am never told unless he chooses to have me know, while yet, oddly enough, I do not feel at all hurt if he does not tell. It was, in fact, three days after the last midnight summons before I knew that he had suceeeded in tracing the first telephone call to its source. The company, it seems, had put every agency at his disposal, and had hunted down this last message. Twelve hundred miles between it and me! It had started from one of the uttermost stations where the blue bell hangs; beyond which there is no practicable

conversation between the West and the East. I asked the name of the place.

"This message came," replied the doctor, "from a pay-station in a drug-store. The name was Pooltiss — a queer one, was n't it? The number was 207—3."

He did not look at me as he dwelt on these unnecessary details.

"And the town?"

"Omaha."

"He may be dying!" I cried.

Robert shook his head.

"Sick? In trouble? In need? Wandering from place to place — homeless! He has gone back, farther West, has n't he?"

The doctor did not answer.

"Or he may be — thoughtless. He used so often to say, 'Oh, I did n't mean anything.' He may not mean anything by this. Or it may not be he at all."

"Any of these things is possible."

"He ought to come home to his wife!" I said below my breath. I have never spoken so before, not even to Robert. But there is something, as I told him once, in the roused pride of a tender woman with which a man must reckon, first or last. Mine battles with my tenderness and plays victor with me now, at this bewil-

dered time — of all times, that when I should have expected myself to melt with love and longing. I feel but little longing for my husband, and how much love I will not, must not, dare not, ask myself. The strongest tie between the married is the love of the wife; I am convinced that more marriages are saved from destruction by this than by any other fact in life. If my love for Dana is perishing — whose fault is that? How has he flung from him the treasure that he had? I who gave him my uttermost, I who made a subject of my sovereign soul before his lightest whim, I who bent my will before his, as if one melted a steel blade in a mighty fire and folded it back upon itself, laying it white and gleaming at his feet,— I, Wilderness Girl made Wife, Pride beaten into Love,— how, God forgive him, has he treated me? . . .

"He ought to come home to his wife!" I repeated aloud. It was as if I were willing the whole world should know what I said. Then I heard my old friend speaking; his voice seemed to come from a great distance.

"Be patient, Marna. Be gentle. Believe the best. Wait a little. There may be reasons —"

He turned away from me, halted, came back, and looked at me with wretched, noble eyes.

"Love him as long as you can," he said gently. "Try for a while longer. It is worth . . . trying . . . suffering . . . to save a married love."

Before I could answer, he had shut the door and gone. I went up and took hold of the knob, and I am not ashamed to write what I did. I went up and bent my face and put my cheek to the door, where his hand had touched it.

"You are the best man I ever knew," I thought.

Later.

I CANNOT sleep. I have been thinking of the evening when Robert asked me to marry him. It was the first winter that Dana was reading to Father. They were in the library, and Robert and I were in the drawing-room; and I had on a rose-pink dress with white chiffon, and the slippers matched, and Robert liked the dress.

To him I said: "I am fond of you, Robert, but I do not love you. I could never love you so as to marry you. I do not want to be anybody's wife." In my own mind I said: "You are too short. And you are very plain. And you are very old—as much as thirty."

December the second.

ELIOT does not come any more; I don't know why. He has been suddenly taken away and

put on duty elsewhere. The doctor suggested another nurse — I think his name was Peterkin; but I objected to Peterkin.

"Then," he observed, "you will lock the front door?"

I shook my head. Now why, I wonder, *did* I shake my head? Why, when I feel so about Dana, why, when Dana has treated me so, why do I *not* bolt the door?

I cannot perplex the doctor worse than I puzzle myself. He has sent our old James over to stay nights here till Eliot is at liberty again. James is quite shocked at sleeping in the library. He never did such a thing in the governor's house. But he calls me Miss Marna, and there 's some comfort in that. I wonder what has become of Eliot?

There have been no more telephone calls, which is convenient, for I am sure the last trumpet would have its hands full if it tried to wake up James. He used to sleep in the coach-house, with four horses trampling beneath.

So I listen for the telephone. I do not sleep much.

December the tenth.

The telephone continues dumb. I do not believe those calls were from anybody in particular at all; some operator's blunder, most

likely, as I told the doctor. The doctor made no answer.

In fact, nothing has happened, and everything has happened, for Robert has gone away on a vacation. He has had no vacation since he started the hospital; all summer he stood by his post, when other men were off. I suppose he does need it. I should not have believed that I would miss the doctor so.

It is not a frequented part of the river.

December the thirteenth.

MARION has a cold, and we have had to send for Dr. Packard. I don't think he understands the child in the least. I wish Robert would come back. I am lost in a hieroglyph. I thought I knew what solitude was; now I perceive that I never had the key to the cipher. I am so lonely that I am frightened. If there were a spot in the world where I could go and hurl myself into space, I think I should do it. I used to have fancies about letting myself out of a window in easterly storms when I was a girl and comfortable. Now that I am a wife and wretched, a window seems a small outlet. I want something vast and daring—a desperate leap into a fathomless fate. What could be worse than to go on

tamely where and as I am? Who will teach me how to escape myself? What philosophy is there for a woman whose whole being has been turned back upon itself, a mighty current dammed, and toppling—forbidden in the essence of her nature? What shall be done for an undervalued tenderness? What can friendship offer to a deserted wife?

The doctor does not write to me. I suppose, in fact, he is under no obligation to do so.

December the fourteenth.

I HAVE had a note from the doctor. It was mailed on the cars somewhere,—I could not make out where,—and it was so hurriedly written that he forgot to date it. He writes most kindly, most thoughtfully. He begs me to be quiet and brave, not to give up either hope or anything else. He is sorry to have to leave me just at this trying time; he will not be gone a day longer than is really necessary,—he reminds me with a touching gentleness that he really needed the vacation, for he is pretty tired,—and he will write me when he can. If I have any more telephone messages, I am to repeat them to him, in care of the Central Exchange both in New York and in Chicago, as his movements are a little uncertain, and he would not wish to

be beyond my reach in any emergency. And I am not to feel that he has forgotten my difficulties for an hour, but that he is doing the best he can for all concerned. He signs the letter:

"Faithfully your friend, and Dana's,
"ROBERT HAZELTON."

Oh, God bless him, God bless him! And I don't care if that *is* "equal to a kiss." Of such is the tenderness that the whole wide world might see and be the better for. The grateful affection of an unhappy woman, indebted above measure to a good, unselfish man, is not a thing to feel ashamed of or to hide.

December the fifteenth.

THIS evening the telephone called again. It was quite early, hardly nine o'clock, and James had not come in. Mercibel had been over, but did not stay; it was her evening off duty, and she was on her way to see her children; they live with their grandmother. If I had to board Marion with relatives, and work for my living and hers, I wonder should I be more, or less, unhappy?

"Sorrow has her elect," Mercibel says. The relativity of trouble is a mystery of which I am just beginning to be aware. The doctor has a

paralyzed patient who says her ideal of human happiness is to be able to walk across the room and get her own tooth-brush. (He is curing the patient.)

My telephone call was from the doctor. It seemed to be a long-distance call, but I could hear his voice quite readily and perfectly — his dear voice. Oh, I will be honest with my own soul! It *is* a dear voice to me; there is not a cadence of its quietness and strength which does not hold just so much self-forgetting, me-remembering melody. There are certain tones at which my spirits rise like leaves in a strong wind, and seek the skies — my poor, disordered, disheartened spirits — as if they were birds. There are certain others before which every nerve in my soul and body calms and rests. The voice is the man, and Robert's has stood between me and despair (I believe I have said this before, at some time; whether I have or not, I think it all the time) — his voice has stood between me and despair so long that I cannot help loving it. Why need I?

He did not say very much by the telephone; only to ask if I kept well, and Marion, and if I had heard any news that I wished him to know.

"Do not feel that you are forgotten," he said.

"I shall not be beyond reach of helping you in any emergency."

"Have courage," he added. "Be hopeful. Better things than you fear may be possible. I am telephoning you to-night to say this. Keep well. Be quiet. Be strong. Be brave."

His resonant voice reverberates in my ears yet, like a rich Belgian bell. As he shut the wire off, he said comfortably:

"Expect me home in three or four days." He forgot to tell me where he was telephoning from.

December the sixteenth.

To-day the doctor called again from he knows where. There is a snow-storm, and the wires are pneumonic, and roar wildly. I could scarcely make out what he was trying to say, and we had to give the message up. If I understood at all correctly, Robert said a singular thing:

"*Pray for one you love.*"

No man ever asked me to pray for anything before; I suppose it never occurred to any person that I could be a praying woman.

Poor little "sumptuous pagan"! how should she be? The gods die with the joys, I think; Christianity must be the religion of patience, of denial; and I am not patient.

Pray for one I love? . . . Suppose I tried?

Later.

I HAVE tried. I do not know how. I think I shall educate my daughter in what George Sand calls "la science de Dieu"; for she shall not come to eight-and-twenty years with an uncultivated spiritual nature — not so ignorant a person as I.

An hour later.

PRAY for one I love? . . . Then for whom shall I pray? Pagan beauty stole my heart and toyed with it, and cast it petulantly down. Patient duty gathered the bruised thing, and cherished it, and guarded it gently, from itself and from its guardian. How should a woman pray? Prayer, I think, must be as honest as love, or joy, or anguish; it is one of the elemental emotions; it cannot confuse anything, or beguile God.

Sudden expressions of my husband's face start out upon the paper where I write, like pictures which my pen traces against its will. Words that he has spoken — scenes that I would perish to forget — leap upon me. All the anguish of this deserted year surges pounding through my arteries; I can understand how people die of heartbreak in one great, significant moment of self-revelation.

Cruelty flung me into the hands of kindness;

neglect left me to devotion; coldness hurled me at the feet of tenderness, a disregarded, undervalued woman; selfishness tossed me—where? Into what? Upon the truest heart, against the noblest nature, that I ever knew.

Suppose I knelt and tried to pray—I could only repeat the Morning Lesson or some of the Collects. Perhaps if I wrote a prayer it would be the most genuine thing possible—to me. I found in Father's Greek Testament yesterday this, copied in his own hand, and called "The Prayer of Fénelon":

Lord, take my heart, for I cannot give it to Thee. And when Thou hast it, keep it, for I would not take it from Thee. And save me in spite of myself, for Christ's sake. Amen.

December the seventeenth.

Thou great God! Invisible! Almighty! I am not a religious woman, and I do not know how to express myself, but I will not soil my soul by one uncandid word. Be Thou to me the utter Truth. Then shall my heart utter it, and give Thee back Thyself.

I am a woman unhappy and perplexed. I have not even the excuse of a great temptation to justify what I feel—only a subtle one, like a mist that blurs my vision.

Thou God! I do not care so much — for any other thing — except to do what is right. Teach me where rightness is! I am willing to count its price, to pay its cost. I am willing to be very lonely, lonelier than I need to be, if I can be sure of doing right. I am willing to give up the only comfort I have, if I ought to do that. . . . Hear my first prayer, O God!—Dana, Dana, *Dana!* Wherever in this wide world my poor husband is — I pray for him! If he is sick, or sinful, if he is in any trouble, if he has forgotten me, though he should come back and be cruel to me — I pray for him, for *him!*

December the eighteenth.

The doctor has got home. I think he arrived at dusk, but it was late before he came over, nearly ten o'clock. He looked fatigued beyond description, and yet he had a radiance. All the room seemed to shine when he entered it. I had that old feeling that he stood in a stream of light, and it was as if I crossed the current when I moved to take his outstretched hand. There was a solemn elation in his eyes.

"You have had a good rest!" I cried, "a happy journey!"

"A happy journey, yes." Smiling, he studied me as if my too candid face were a Chaldean

seal. For the first time in my life I felt uncomfortable before my old friend, and I took refuge in the best of all civilized disguises — elaborate frankness.

"I missed you, Doctor, ridiculously. I think you ought either never to go away, or else to stay all the time. I have yet to learn to do without you, Robert."

"All that will take care of itself," said Robert, gently. "There are first that shall be last. And I am glad that you missed me, too. It harmed nobody, and it touches me."

If Robert's face had frosted, or assumed any of the masculine defenses which a commonplace man throws out between himself and a woman whom he is capable of misinterpreting, I think, dear as he is to me, I could have spurned him in my heart. But his comfortable, matter-of-fact words restored the poise of my own nature; the vertigo steadied instantly. By a divination he put me delicately at my ease, like the gentleman he is.

We talked awhile quietly. The radiance that I spoke of remained translucent on his face. He said he would come in to-morrow, and ran up and kissed Marion in her crib, and played with Job a little, and then he went away. What was that curious thing he said? There are first

that shall be last? . . . Robert is usually so direct; he is never given to conversational sorceries.

December the nineteenth.

The doctor came in this noon. He asked if I could spare James, who is needed in the coach-house, and suggested the objectionable Peterkin as a substitute. I demurred.

"I saw Eliot about the grounds this morning. If he is at liberty now, why can't I have Eliot? — if you insist on anybody."

"Eliot is on night duty," replied the doctor. "I thought perhaps Peterkin — but never mind. Keep James, if you prefer, by all means."

Now, penitent, I protested. For Peterkin I now entreated. Peterkin, only Peterkin, could protect my imperiled household or assuage my troubled spirit. But the doctor smiled and shook his head. He did not ask me to abjure my folly and bolt my doors. He has ceased to fret me on this topic. One of the remarkable things about Robert is that he conforms to a weakness as generously as he admires a strong point. He accepts a woman just as she is, and if she does a foolish thing, he takes it as a matter of course, like a symptom. If he had the chance he might cure it, but he never exasperates her by resenting it. I know, when he loved me

long ago, before I was married, I used to feel that he loved me for my very faults.

It would be difficult to say how much happier and safer I feel now that the doctor has come back. I have been listening lately at night for the telephone — it is impossible to say why. But it has not called again. I dusted all Dana's music to-day.

December the twentieth; noon.

THERE was a savage storm last night — sleet and snow fighting. James dug my paths before he went to the hospital, and came back after a while, plowing his way over with Father's little old snow-plow and the doctor's white horse. There is quite a clear path all around the tree-house. It makes me feel less shut in and cut off. Mercibel, at the office window, waved her nurse's apron and blew a kiss to me. The doctor will hardly come over, I think. I understand there are some pretty sick patients. There seems to be some agitation at the hospital. The countenance of my father's house has a tense expression, as if it concealed drama — as it does, as it must. All the tragedy of all that disabled and disordered life crowds crushing upon the superintendent. How seldom this occurs to me! I am engrossed in my own drama. I think I must be yet very young.

The telephone wires are furred with sleet and sag heavily, but still hold their thin lips between myself and the world; between myself and the watchful, patient, unrewarded kindness which has never failed me anywhere.

December the twenty-first.

An extraordinary thing has happened.

The storm has been a wild caprice, lulling and rousing without any visible reason; but by mid-afternoon the snow ceased sullenly. There was no sun, but a vicious wind, and a stinging powder filled the air. James came over and cleared out all my paths again, and brought the doctor's remembrances, and was I quite comfortable? or did I need anything that he could do? The doctor did not telephone. Mercibel did once or twice, but I thought her absent-minded, for some reason.

After dinner, between half-past seven and eight o'clock, the ghost of the Wilderness Girl got me, for I have stayed indoors too long. I put myself into rubber boots and waterproof, pulled the hood over my head, and ran out. A young moon wandered somewhere in a waste of clouds, but it seemed to me only to make everything darker; all the shadows of the shrubbery crouched like creatures about to spring, and the

tree-house stood in such a jungle of blackness that I was afraid of it. I tramped about for a while, running up and down the paths, and crunching the snow, as children do. But I did not stay long; I could not have told why, but I was definitely afraid. I came back and into the house, threw off my waterproof, but, I don't know for what reason, did not remove my rubber boots. I stood in the hall, by the register, warming my feet. As I did this, I thought the handle of the front door turned.

"It is the doctor," I said. But it was not the doctor, and the door did not open. I started to call Job, but he was in the kitchen with Luella. At this moment the banshee up in my room began to wail, and made such a noise that I called up to Ellen to stifle her with a handkerchief. Ellen, having obeyed me, came to the balusters over my head, and said that Marion would not go to sleep without Dombey, and should she give in to such as that? I answered: "Oh, she may have Dombey; I 'll get him and toss him up to you," and I went into the library for the doll. The shades were not drawn — Dana never liked to have them. When I stooped to pick up Dombey, I saw upon the window-sill the fingers of a man's hand.

I stood quite still, with Dombey in my arms,

and looked at the window. The hand slid, finger by finger, and slipped away. It reminded me of the hand I saw in my dream of the Uruguay dungeon, and it was a left hand, too; but it had no ring. I threw on my waterproof, unlatched the front door, and opened it wide.

"At last," I thought, "we have the burglar." It did not occur to me to be afraid. Such a sense of wrong overtook me, the rage of the home against its violator, that I cared for nothing but to defy the fellow. I understand now, perfectly, how small women, timid ones, have sprung upon tramps and thieves, and choked them and held them till the neighbors came. By this time Job had begun to growl from the kitchen, and Luella had let him out. I ran down the steps and out into the snow, and Job met me at the corner of the house. The dog moved stealthily; he did not bark.

"Whoever you are," I cried, "make your errand known, or leave my house!"

There was no person to be seen. I pushed on toward the tree-house. There, cringing, blotted into the jungle of shadows, I perceived, or I thought I did, the figure of a man. It was a pitiable figure, poor and outcast.

"Who are you," I said more gently, "and what do you want?"

There was no reply, and I stood, uncertain what to do. The thin young moon at this moment dived into a sea of clouds, and when she emerged the man had gone. I called to Job, but he was nowhere to be seen. I came back into the house and shut the door. From long habit, even then I did not bolt it. I sat down by the register, shivering and drying my wet skirts. It did not occur to me to telephone the doctor what had happened, or, if it did, I thought I would spare him. He has care enough, and I knew James would be over soon. It was by then perhaps half-past eight o'clock. Ellen came down and asked me what had happened.

"Nothing," I said. "Go back to Marion."

"I won't do, without the boy-doll," argued Ellen, studying me furtively. I now perceived that the old servant was distinctly scared, and also that I still held Dombey affectionately clasped to my heart. I gave her the doll, and she went up-stairs reluctantly. When she had gone, I slid to the front door and opened it, and looked out and about. No person was to be seen. There was now moon enough to show the tree-house clearly; it was quite empty. I shut the door and came back, and sat down by the hall register again. I had forgotten about Job.

I was sitting there when the door opened in earnest, swiftly though softly, and the doctor entered. To my last hour I shall not be able to forget the expression of his face.

"You have had a fright!" he began. "Tell me all about it — quickly."

I now saw Eliot behind the doctor, and James, and Peterkin — a good match between them all for a gang of housebreakers.

"How in the world did you know?" I parried foolishly.

Robert interrupted me with real impatience. I thought, for the instant, he would have liked to shake me — but not hard.

"Speak, can't you?" he cried. "There is no time to lose. Did he annoy you? Did you see the man?"

I collected myself, and told him all there was to tell. It was little enough, and seemed to disappoint him. The two nurses had by this time vanished, directed, I thought, by a single upward motion of the superintendent's heavy eyelids.

"What do you say you said," demanded the doctor, "when you first opened the door?"

"I said: '*Whoever you are, make your errand known, or leave my house.*'"

The doctor turned the high collar of his fur-lined coat, half concealing his averted face.

"Go up to bed," he said. "Peterkin will sleep here to-night. I have need of James. If you are disturbed again, call me *instantly*, Marna. Do you understand?"

"Don't be cross to me, Doctor," I quavered childishly. "I will do whatever you say."

He went, and Peterkin came. I am too excited to sleep, and so I write. Job has but just come in. He is wet through, and shivers violently. He must have been out a long time.

December the twenty-second.

Our tramp has not done us the honor again, and nothing whatever has happened. In fact, life is more than commonly dull, for I took cold that night in the snow, and am cherishing a sore throat in unexampled obscurity; the doctor having gone away. So, I surmise, has Eliot. So, I think, has Peterkin. James appears every night as before, only now very early, by six o'clock. Mercibel comes over and stays through the day—I suppose because I have a sore throat; at all events, those seem to be her orders. She answers the telephone, which rings occasionally. Now and then she seems to have messages from the doctor, who inquires for me, with his remembrances. He does not ask me to come to the telephone. Mercibel says he says I am to be

very careful of this throat, and not to strain my voice. I am trying to finish Marion's Christmas presents—chiefly am I dressing a new wife for Dombey. I have got her a doll's house from her father, for I could not have her think he had forgotten to send her anything. I am very lonely. I can't see why the doctor should have to go away so soon again. Mercibel says it is a professional errand and he could not help it. I miss him cruelly — I am quite demoralized by missing him; I may as well own to this as to experience it.

What will become of me if Robert is so necessary to me as this? . . .

A woman may be made very unhappy, I find, for the sake of a man whom she does not love, whom she must not love. Friendship takes hold of women more seriously than of men, I think. Is it a disorder to which we are temperamentally more subject?

December the twenty-third.

The doctor has come home again. He called at once, very early this morning, to see about my throat. I was startled at his appearance; he must have had a hard trip. But yet he has happy eyes. As I watched them I felt that mine might safely say anything, for it was as if

he did not exactly see me. He talked more than usual. He spoke of Dana, of his absence and silence, and of what I had endured.

"You have behaved like a queen at her execution," he said. He talked about my husband for quite a while. My thoughts were of him, but his were of Dana. But I was so glad he had come back that nothing troubled me. Job sat on my lap and listened with a portentous solemnity to our conversation; there are times when that dog seems like a brownie. Job has been restless and unhappy these last few days; he sleeps on the foot of my bed, and starts frequently, and has bad dreams and little Yorkshire nightmares out of which I have to wake him up and reassure him.

December the twenty-fourth; afternoon.

Marion hit the Parthenon frieze behind the library sofa a hard whack with Banny Doodle, and the paper broke away; the paste had dried, and the frieze has hung loosely for a long time. I went up to fix it, and I saw the Landseer dogs that I had forgotten about — David and Dora.

Then I remembered when I first put them on the bruise in the calcimine, and how Dana made fun of me, and how he helped me to put the frieze up. I thought how he teased Job by

patting David and Dora, and how Job snarled with jealousy and sprang at the picture, and how Dana laughed out — nobody ever had such a laugh as Dana. How happy was I! How dear was he! And we did love each other — God knows.

"Pity Mommer!" cooed Marion behind me.

"Go and get Job," I commanded wildly, for I could not have the child behold my overthrow.

Something beat about me like a whirlwind rising from — the woman's God knows where. . . . I have tried to forget, I have tried to forget! — not to suffer, not to feel, to divert my soul, to supplant Almighty Love by something else; and I thought I had succeeded, but I had climbed a ladder which rested in the air — and now, in a moment, it toppled with me. And David and Dora had brought it down . . . that little thing, that little foolish dear home thing, that Dana and I had done, and laughed about, together.

"Why don't you do as I bid you?" I demanded, crossly enough, of Marion. "Why don't you go for Job?"

My daughter put up a grieved lip.

"Job came his own self. And I fink I will go make a call on Ellen." Holding her little head haughtily, my baby scornfully left me.

Ashamed, I turned to follow her, and hurried a little, and so stumbled over something in the hall — and it was Dana's old blue velveteen coat. Job was curled up on it, fixed and watchful. How he had found it, why he had brought it, only Job can say. It was plain that he had meant to bring the coat to me, and, laboriously dragging it, had wavered in his purpose at the foot of the stairs. Perhaps a glimpse of David and Dora had arrested his inner motive; one never can tell: a highly organized dog is very complex.

Commending Job and comforting Marion, I took the coat and came up with it into Dana's room, and locked the doors; and I thought I would hang the coat up first — but oh, the touch of it, the touch of it! . . .

At first I only laid my cheek upon it, for I dared no more. But remembrance has her Judgment Day, when the books are opened. And the illuminated text of married love which I have sealed with seven seals stared at me from silver and from crimson pages — and there was no more power in me to close the book.

I caught my husband's coat to my heart, and clasped it, and kissed it, and then I kissed it again — oh, and again, till the tears stopped the kisses; and when the sobs came, I felt that some-

thing finer than reason was saved in me. I threw myself on Dana's bed, and sunk my face in the coat, and stroked it.

I thought of everything that I had tried to forget, and I forgot everything that I had been remembering. I got down from the bed, and knelt, with my face in the coat, and lifted my hands, and thought I would try to pray again; but all I could say was:

"*Dana!*"

For we did love each other — and I am his wife. All the awful power of the marriage tie closed about me, — its relentlessness, its preciousness, — not to be escaped. The dead joys got out of their graves and looked upon me. I thought of all that faith and sacredness, and of the honor in which we cherished it. I thought how I had barred these things from my heart because it was broken and so it could not hold them.

Who said: "It is worth trying . . . suffering . . . to save a married love"? That must have been Robert. I got up from my knees and walked to and fro across my husband's room. I went to the window and drew his curtains and looked out at his stars. And, by the holy name of the happiest hour that we had ever known, I charged myself with a vow, for Dana's sake.

As soon as I was something composed, I sent for the doctor so urgently that he came at once. Marion had gone to bed, and the library was littered with her Christmas things. I was tying up Dombey's second wife in silver paper with a crimson ribbon.

"Let me help you," said Robert, directly. He took the doll, and tied the package neatly; in fact, he saw that my fingers trembled so I could not do it.

Abruptly I began:

"Doctor, I am going to find my husband. I shall take the child and start."

"Where are you going?"

"I do not know."

"When?"

"At once — to-morrow, I think."

"Why?"

"He may need me — who knows?"

"I," said Robert, gravely.

"*You?*"

I pushed the second wife into the doll's house, anyhow, and she slid out into the doctor's lap. He picked her up, and put her carefully somewhere, before he spoke again.

"Tired of trusting me, Marna?"

Then I said: "I must act for myself. I have borne all I can. If he is alive, I will find him. If he is dead —"

"Would you be willing," interrupted Robert, gently, "to wait a little — perhaps two or three days? I can advise you better if you give me a little time. I have some pretty sick patients just now," he added wearily, "and such a step would be very important. You would need advice."

"I should need *you*, I grant you!" I cried out cruelly. "I can't even love my own husband without your help — I have come to that."

"*Marna!*" pleaded Robert, in a voice that wrung my heart.

I took one look at his face, and then something in me gave way suddenly, and I slid to the hassock on the floor below me, and — what might I have done? I cannot tell. I do not know. Put my head upon his knee, like the child that I sometimes seem to myself to have been to him, and so sobbed out the "Forgive me, Robert!" which came surging to my lips? I do not know. I cannot tell. Instantly he had lifted me to my feet.

"You are tired out," he said. "Go up to bed at once. Sleep if you can. Don't try to talk to me. I understand. Child, I understand you better than you do yourself. I know . . . I know how you love your husband; better than any man of us — is — apt to be loved."

"I will see you to-morrow," he added in his usual manner. "We will talk everything over. Trust me till then."

"I will trust you till I am dead, and after," I answered him. We shook hands as if nothing had happened. At the door, he turned and regarded me mournfully and something solemnly, I thought — as if the man were looking his last upon some dear and sacred privilege.

"If I can keep — trustworthy —" he said; and so he shut the door.

Later.

I HAPPENED on this, to-day, that Stevenson said of himself: "I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God."

January the fifteenth.

UNTIL this I have had no moments. Now, while my patient is sleeping naturally, my heart draws its first breath. It will rest me more to write than to sleep.

I see that my record broke asunder abruptly on Christmas eve, and with the doctor's call.

I slept that night, by God's good grace, though no one could have been more surprised at this fact than myself. I dreamed that Marion and I started out together on Christmas day to find

her father, and that we went to Uruguay, and crossed the swamp with the log and the snake, and Dana was in the dungeon with the crosses, and he put up his left hand with the wedding-ring upon it, and so I knew him; and I tore away the bars, for they were old and rusty, and set him free. And he said — I was dreaming what he said when Marion waked me by slapping me with Dombey's second wife.

The day went wildly to me. It was not a pleasant day, but snowed a little and blew more. The wind was savage, and the sky frowned. The doctor did not come over, though Mercibel did. Now and then I got away from Marion's Christmas litter, and went up-stairs and put things into bags, at random. I think my idea was to start as soon as the doctor came — to what place, to what end, I knew no more than the child. My head whirled. I kept repeating:

"I will find my husband."

In the afternoon I telephoned the doctor impatiently, but he was not in. As it grew to be dusk, everything looked differently to me, and I felt suddenly weakened in soul and body, like a person spent by a delirium, and I thought

"I can never find him without Robert. I must wait for Robert."

But Robert did not come over. Marion and

I had our supper, and Luella went out; but Ellen stayed, and James came over; Peterkin did not, so I was alone with my father's old servants.

It still snowed fitfully, not steadily nor much. There was some sleet, and it rapped on the windows like little knuckles. The banshee did not cry, and, except for the sleet, there was not any sound. Marion had gone to bed, but Job was playing with his rubber chicken. The chicken had a gamboge head, and Job had cut its throat already. I sat dully watching Job and the chicken. He dropped the chicken while I did this, and went to the door. I said:

"Oh, you don't want to go out again so soon, Job; it 's snowing." But the dog insisted. I let him out, and came back and sat down again. I picked up Dombey's second wife, and Dombey, and Banny Doodle, and put them all in the doll's house, arranging them childishly, as if I had been a little girl myself.

"We are all dolls," I thought, "and fate plays with us." I added Job's chicken to the collection, stupidly.

I went out into the hall and stood by the register, and called up to Ellen to see if Marion were happy; but Ellen had shut the nursery door, for the night was cold, and so she did not

hear me. I was quite alone when Job scratched on the front door to be let in.

I opened the door immediately, but the dog did not come in. He ran off again into the snow, and I shut the door again. Presently I heard him scratching at the door once more, and this time he whined impatiently. Once more I opened the door, and spoke to him rather sharply:

"Don't keep me waiting here! Come in, if you are coming at all!"

But Job ran down the steps and off. I thought of our tramp, but I felt no fear of any kind, unless that some one should steal Job, and I did not shut the door. I stood still in the hall and called the dog more gently:

"Come right in, Dear. Don't stay out in the storm any longer!"

As I spoke, the dog leaped up the steps, shouting wildly; ran to me and looked back; sprang to my arms, kissed me, and ran back. Without hesitation I followed Job, and stepped out into the light, fresh snow.

At the foot of the steps a man leaned against the piazza pillar, heavily. He did not start when he saw me; and Job was in his arms. The man regarded me steadily.

"In God's name," I cried out upon him, "*who are you?*"

"Well," he said, "Job knows, if you don't."

I did not answer, for I did not dare. I felt that the wrong word would pull the whirling world crashing on my head. I went up to the man, and held out my hand, and led him up the steps, and the light smote his face, and it was my husband's face.

"I did n't know," he said timidly, "whether you 'd want me back or not."

Without a word, I led him into the house and shut the door behind him. I don't know why I did it, but I slid the key, and put it in my pocket. He stood still, like a child or a sick person, just where I left him. The snow dripped from his beard. I took off his hat, and then, in the full gas-light, I saw his face . . . the havoc on it: shame, disease, despair, and desolation — oh, desolation worse, by all the agonies, than mine!

"I was a darn fool to leave you, Marna." he said, just as I had heard him say it in my dream. "I can't stand it any longer. I thought I 'd come in — awhile — even if you did n't want to keep me."

"— What? You don't say very much, I notice. Well, I don't blame you, Marna."

"— Don't try, Marna — if it comes so hard as that. Don't stand on ceremony. I 'd rather

you did n't make such an effort to — be glad to see a fellow. It does n't matter very much. I can — go away again."

He turned his shattered face and tottered toward the door. I slid between him and it, and stretched out my hands.

"I 'm pretty — wet," he said uncertainly.

I went straight up to him and clasped him to my heart, and his shaking arms closed fast about me.

When I lifted my face, the doctor was there, and my father's old servants. Dana did not speak to any of them; he looked about passively.

"Get off his wet things," said the doctor; and James came up to help us. It did not occur to me till afterward to wonder how Robert got into the house, for I had the front-door key in my pocket. Nothing occurred to me. Dana had come home.

We led him into the library and up to the fire, and the doctor rolled up the Morris chair for him. I now saw for the first time that my husband was a very sick man. He had a singular expression. His eyes looked as if they had been varnished. He looked around the room, noticed the Christmas clutter, the doll's house and the dolls, and the Parthenon frieze which

he had helped me to paste over David and Dora.

"It all looks so — natural," he said pitifully. All this while he kept hold of my hand. Job came up quietly, and got into his lap. We were standing just so — the doctor on the other side of him, and Ellen and James behind — when Marion melted into the room. Her little bare feet had made no sound upon the padded stairs, and she startled us all. Job jumped down from Dana's lap, and went and brought his chicken to his master. No one spoke. Her father turned his head slowly, and by the time that he saw the little girl, she was quite near him. For an instant I think she was frightened; she backed off, wide-eyed and wondering, but advanced again, and leaned up, in her little white night-gown, against his knee.

"Why, she remembers me!" he whispered. His face worked; he hid it on the child's soft head and wept aloud.

"Pity Popper!" said Marion, distinctly. She put up both her hands and stroked his hollow cheeks.

We got him up-stairs as soon as we could, the doctor and I — into his own room and his own bed. Ellen had warmed the sheets, and every-

"'PITY POPPER!' SAID MARION, DISTINCTLY."

thing was ready, as if he had been expected, or as if he had never been away. I managed to get in and light his candle, and fix all his little things as he used to like them. He looked at everything pathetically, but he did not speak. He had grown strangely very weak, I thought, and panted for his breath. His forehead went a sudden deadly color which terrified me, and I ran and sat on the bed beside him, and took him in my arms. His sunken face fell upon my breast.

"You 're a dear old girl!" he said.

"I think," said the doctor, unexpectedly, "that you had better leave him to us for a while."

And suddenly I saw that Eliot was in the room. But I did not move.

"Go down-stairs, Mrs. Herwin," commanded Dr. Hazelton, peremptorily.

Wondering and pondering, I obeyed.

When they called me back, Dana was asleep. It was a dense sleep, and he did not rouse as I sat down on the edge of the bed beside him. His gleaming pallor was replaced by a stagnant, crimson color that I liked no better.

"Has he a fever?" I whispered.

"No."

"Are n't you going to tell me what ails him?"

"Certainly I am."

"What is it, Doctor?"

"*Morphine.*" He drew up Dana's sleeve and showed me his poor marred arm. Dana did not stir as the doctor gently replaced the sleeve.

VIII

"COME down-stairs," said Robert, "and I will tell you everything."

I looked at Dana and shook my head.

"He will not miss you," urged the doctor. "He will know nothing more till it is time for the next dose."

I asked when that would be.

"At three in the morning. Eliot will attend to that. Leave him with Eliot; trust him entirely to Eliot. He has had the care of him for —some time."

I don't think I uttered a word; I scarcely experienced surprise. It seemed, now, that anything might happen, or might have happened. I followed Robert down-stairs in silence, and he shut the library door.

He bade me lie down upon the lounge, "because I needed all my strength for what was before me now," and he covered me carefully with the afghan, and drew up the Morris chair opposite me, and began at once. It was still

early, scarcely nine o'clock, and we talked two hours — evading nothing, facing everything.

He began by telling me how he had at times suspected, before Dana went to Uruguay, that he was forming the morphine habit.

"But he was not my patient; I never had his confidence. The early symptoms are elusive; I was never sure. I could scarcely create a theory; I might have wronged him by the suspicion; I decided to keep it to myself."

"So you sent him atropine 3× !" I cried. Curiously, my mind fastened itself upon this unimportant detail. It seemed to me as if the important ones would come faster than I could bear them. As they did — as they did!

I tried to listen as quietly as he tried to speak; but it was not easy for either; and Robert, I could see, was greatly worn with all that he had endured for Dana's sake, and mine. My mind ran ahead of his, as a woman's mind does with a man's, and I would take loops in the mystery which he was unraveling slowly, and give the snarl a tear. I would say:

"Yes, yes! So those telephone messages *were* from him? I see — I see.

"And you traced him by them? It was you who found Dana! It was *you* who brought my husband back to me."

Then, when I had collected myself a little: "And you have done it all in these two weeks!"

"On the contrary," replied the doctor, "I have had Mr. Herwin's movements watched ever since he put himself under the suspicion of having deserted you. He was met by my agents when the *Marion* landed . . . Did you suppose I was sitting with my hands folded all that while? while your husband, *your* husband — There was nobody else to do it for you. Your father would have . . . We lost him between San Francisco and St. Paul; and that was the hardest part of it."

"Do you mean — " I began. "Do you mean — "

"Never mind what I mean."

"Your nurses? Eliot? Peterkin?"

"Eliot and Peterkin and — It does not signify who, does it?"

"I will not interrupt you again, Robert," I said humbly. "Tell it in your own way."

So he told it all, and in his own way; simple, direct, modest, manly — Robert's way. He told me how he had happened to know that there was a sanatorium in that little Western town with the queer name, Healer; and how he had telephoned by the longest long-distance wires in the land half across the continent, and

so traced Dana — a poor, wretched, outcast patient — in that place; how he had despatched Eliot, and how he himself had followed; how Dana had left the sanatorium when Eliot reached it, and wandered back to Omaha and God knows where; how they pursued and how he eluded; how they tracked him down at Chicago — my poor Dana — in an opium den, and brought him with them; for he came willingly with Robert, making only one condition.

"Take me to your hospital and treat me till I am fit to see my wife," entreated Dana. "I will not go to her as I am."

"So I did as he asked," said Robert. "He would not come on any other terms. My way would have been to bring him straight to you — there were so many risks. As it was, . . . when he escaped . . . I should never have forgiven myself — nor you me. I can't talk of it! — not yet."

Nor can I think of it — not yet.

For my Dana was the only patient who ever escaped the superintendent's guards; and when I think how he had come straight to me, and wandered about his own home that night, and did not dare come in — and how I saw him in the tree-house, outcast and despairing, and did not know — and he might never have come back — and yet I did not know — and how I

had hardened my heart against him all that while, for I did not know—

My poor boy had fled to get the liberty of his slavery. And Robert tracked him down again; he was buying morphine in a poor place, some drug-store at the north end of the city. There, on the evening of the second day, Dana felt a hand upon his arm. And he did not look up, but said: "That you, Hazelton? Well, I 'm glad of it." And again he came with the doctor willingly, but this time without conditions, for he felt himself a beaten man. So he gave himself into Robert's hands, reserving nothing; and Robert brought him to the hospital, and treated him and battled with him and conquered him for those two days. And on Christmas evening suddenly they gave Dana his liberty, to see what use he would make of it; but it was a trap, for he had no liberty, all the exits of the hospital and the grounds being guarded, and the superintendent shadowing his every step.

And my poor boy came straight to me; but he was afraid to make himself known, so he loitered in the snow, uncertain and ashamed, till Job went out and found him.

When we had touched upon these things, giving nervous question and answer, talking rapidly

and concisely, like people who sketch but the table of contents of a long, unfinished volume, the doctor rose abruptly and went up to see Dana. I begged leave to go, but he objected, and I yielded — I found that I must. I remembered what I had said to him in my foolish anger: "I can't even love my own husband without your help, it seems; I have come to that." Now I could not even see my husband without his permission; it had come to that. Robert came down again, in a few minutes, with shining eyes.

"He is doing remarkably well," he said. "But we had better finish talking while we can. I have important things to say to you, Marna. . . . Are you comfortable? Resting? Be quiet. Do not agitate yourself. You are going to need all your strength."

"Before you begin," I said, "tell me this: what has become of my husband's wedding-ring? It is gone."

"I don't think you will be any happier to know."

"Do *you* know?"

"Yes."

"Was it — was it —"

"Pawned in Chicago in that place where we found him."

"This is the worst?"

"So far as I know, it is the worst."

"Very well, Robert. There was no — one else?"

"It is my belief that there has been no one else. The perils of his condition are not that way, and I have made — some inquiries."

"Thank you, Robert," I said humbly, as if it were his doing. "Now I will listen to you."

Then he began to talk to me very gravely, very kindly, with the terrible frankness of the physician, and the merciful gentleness of my old friend. He spoke in short sentences, something like these:

"I have brought your husband back to you, but I have not saved him. I do not even know that I can. That depends as much on you as on me, and more on the patient than on either of us. In this case he has taken the drug hypodermically, the most difficult form of the habit to cure, as it is the easiest and subtlest to create. There are several ways of treating the morphine habit. A man may have the drug taken away from him abruptly; he may recover, and he may not. He may be put upon substitute anodynes; they may serve, and they may fail. He may be treated by a process of gradual reduction, by lessening the drug as fast as the diminution

can be borne; he may be rehabilitated by this process, or he may not. I shall adopt this last method in treating Mr. Herwin. If I were a stranger to him, I might not, necessarily, do so. Since I know him, I select it as being, in my opinion, the only method for him. It is the slowest, but the safest. It will mean a great deal that you do not understand, Marna. The experiment will probably last a year, even if it is successful. He must suffer, and so will you. He must be guarded like a perishing soul—and so interpreted. He must be cherished and loved—above all, he must be borne with *perfectly;* he must be loved *perfectly.* It will not do to offer him any half measure—not to feel to him doubtfully, or critically, or with reservations. You will need all the patience, all the purpose, of your nature. You will need—I was going to say that you will need the infinite qualities. Forgive everything. Forget all you can. Bear anything. Trust. Hope. Endure. Something depends on me, but everything on you. Between us we may save him. I can promise you nothing, but I will do my best; and if I fail, you will forgive me, won't you, Marna? . . .

"Obey me without question, if you expect him to stand any chance at all. Follow every order. Raise no querulous doubts. Work *with* me—as

if we were one being — for Dana's sake. I shall regulate every detail of your life and his — tell you when to devote yourself to him, when to leave him to nurses, how to do this, when not to do that. I shall seem a tyrant to you, often mysterious, sometimes cold. But there is no other chance. Do you think you can trust me?"

Then I said: "If I cannot, if I do not, I cannot trust the God in heaven above us, Robert."

"There is one other thing," said Robert, without smiling. "I am going to speak out to you, soul to soul. Too much is at stake for any paltry reservations — and I can consider nothing but the salvation of my patient. I can't stand on anything — not even on wounding you, Marna — if I must. I think you will understand me; but if you don't, I cannot help that. I must speak and run my risk."

He rose and paced the library, showing his first sign of disturbance in all that tense, tremendous evening.

"Speak, Robert," I said; "I am not dull."

He stopped and looked down upon me with the most solemn and the most beautiful spirit that I ever saw imprisoned in the eyes of any man.

"Marna," he said, "to save your husband you must love him without any qualifications. You must love him *altogether*. You must serve him *altogether*. Nothing must come between yourself and him — not even the shadow of that which never has been and can never be — no other feeling, no other thought. Not even a friendship must divert your interest in Dana's cure — no, not even ours. You will think of it — and express it — as little as possible, Marna. It is the only way. And if I do not . . . express it, you will not allow yourself to believe that I . . . do not think of it. You said you would trust me, you know. And I shall be always here. We must fight this fight together — yet apart — sacredly." . . . His voice broke. He turned abruptly, went up-stairs to his patient, and so left me.

I slipped to my knees and hid my face in my hands. I can never say again that I do not know what it is to pray.

January the thirtieth.

We are living so intensely that I wonder I ever thought I knew what it was to live before. How small are the simple joys and sorrows beside the great dramas where soul and body are intervolved — the tremendous pathological

secrets upon which a human home may lock its doors! There the physician stands high priest, and sacred. There a wife finds herself perhaps for the first time in her married life at peace with her wifehood; she comes to her valuation; all the tenderness of her nature is employed, all that which had not been cherished, that which she had come to count as superfluous and wasted. It is impossible for me to say how happy I am to find myself so necessary to Dana. My poor boy is gaining upon himself day by day, each one bringing a little advance that we can see and he can feel. I heard my father say once, when he was recovering from some illness:

"The happiest people in this world are the convalescents."

There are times when I think the happiest man I ever saw is Dana. There are others when the blackness of the spaces before God said "Let there be light" seems to envelope him; and darkness which can be felt rolls between his soul and mine. But when this happens I have learned to say: "This, too, will pass."

There are days when Eliot is not suffered to leave his patient for the lifting of an eyelash. There are nights when the house is guarded, and when James or Peterkin sleeps in the library. There are others when the doctor himself stays

with us from dark to dawn; but these are rare, and are becoming rarer. Not once yet has Dana fled from us, or obtained it for himself from any source. There is everything in preserving the patient's self-respect and his reputation, Robert says. This he has most skilfully succeeded in doing. Such tact, such gentleness and firmness —but I cannot write of it.

It is understood that Dana has come home from Uruguay with some malarial condition due to the climate. We are often seen walking or driving together. From this circumstance the neighborhood seems to derive a kind of reflected joy. We are so happy that I find no time to write of anything.

To-day Dana asked a great privilege—that Eliot should go out of the house, and that I should spend the whole day with him. The doctor consented without hesitation. There is something, he says, in trusting a patient. Dana and I took a long walk in the morning; in the afternoon Robert sent over his horses, and we had a sleigh-ride, and Marion went with us. Betweenwhiles my dear boy asked me to sit by him, to read to him, and once to brush his hair as I used to do. When he slept he held my hand, and I sat on the edge of the bed, cramped and uncomfortable, and well content. When he woke he said:

"You 're a dear, sweet girl!"

Often he calls me pathetically:

"Marna, can you spare time to stay with me a little? It seems to me you have been gone a great while. I miss you, Marna." Or perhaps it is: "Eliot, where is my wife? I want my wife." Or, "Marion, run and call your mother. I want your mother. Ask her to come and bring her sewing in here. I want her to sit where I can see her."

So Marion runs, and, being overcome with the importance of her mission, tumbles upon her words, and gets no further than:

"Pity Popper! Pity Popper!"

"Marion, Marion!" I say, "I *do* pity Popper with all my heart." And I hurry to him, and he turns his poor face with the havoc on it, and lifts his wasted hand, and draws my cheek to his. Then I see that he is sore beset, and I challenge my love that it may be strength to him, and all my strength that it may be love for him. The tenderness that he used to disregard I can pour upon him, as Radha did on Krishna, "give to him in fullest measure"— now. I am not afraid of loving him too much — now. I am not ashamed to show him how I feel to him — now. If I touch him, if I kiss him, he cherishes me — now. He cannot live without this wine.

February the twelfth.

Dana is beginning to refer sometimes to things that happened while he was away. Until now he has scarcely alluded to the abyss which he thrust between us. Last night he said:

"Oh, I was so homesick, Marna! But I was ashamed to come back. Nobody knows how a man feels . . . so many thousand miles away . . . and sick. Oh, it was such a blanked country!"

The other day he said:

"The nights were the worst. I could not get any sleep without it. One night I said — two nights I said: 'If I die for it, I will not increase the dose to-night.' And it got to be two o'clock, and those sinking-turns came on, and I thought it was all up with me. Then I called you. I cried out very loud: 'Marna! Marna!' Upon my word, dear girl, I believe I thought you 'd hear me."

Then I said:

"I *did* hear, Dana." For I remembered the nights when I heard his voice quite plainly, and it was just two o'clock, and he called: "Marna!"

He has never spoken about his wedding-ring; nor have I. The little gold Madonna still hangs upon his watch-guard, though his

watch is gone. What has she witnessed? She keeps her counsel well.

February the twentieth.

I was looking over some of Dana's things today, for we have been so absorbed with our patient, and so busy with downright nursing, that, really, I have never straightened anything out properly since he came back. The doctor had taken him out driving (with Marion), and I had an hour altogether to myself. In one of his pockets I found my photograph — the old one in the May-flower dress. It was in a leather case that folded over, and it was very much worn. He seems to have lost Marion's, but this — the tears smarted to my eyes when I saw how often he must have handled my picture — my poor boy!

Afterward I was dusting out his traveling dressing-case, and mending it, for the lining had broken away, and under the lining, carefully pinned in so that it should not slip, I found the leaf of the woodbine that I ran and picked for him from the tree-house on that morning — that last one, when he sailed, when the woman with the hand-organ sang, "Keep me from sinking down!" The ruby-red leaf has faded to a dull color, and is quite frail and brittle. I won-

der that it has lasted at all. I kissed the leaf, for I thought perhaps he might have kissed it if he cared enough to keep it. At first I thought I would ask him. But I have concluded that a wife is wiser (consequently happier) not to put emotional catechisms to her husband. Few men take kindly to this feminine habit, even well ones; and a sick man resents it. And a few drops of resentment will extinguish a forest fire of tenderness. The doctor said to me one day when Dana first came home:

"Take as much for granted as possible. Assume all you can."

I have no time in these days to think much — not too much — about the doctor; but once in a while I wonder how he has become a master of the magicians: how he should be expert in the occult art of married life — this lonely man. I suppose it may be partly because he belongs to one of the confessional professions.

March the first.

To-day there has been a blasting storm. We have sat within a white whirlwind, as if we were on the outside of a blind planet, spinning through frozen ether on a mysterious errand, directed by the moving finger of the unseen God. So, I think, a human love whirls blindly before

its fate, driven by the Power not itself, through fire, through frost, through midnight, through dawn; and the heart rides upon it, like organized life upon the globe, fixed there without consent or power to rebel, whirling on anyhow, anywhere, gladly or madly, yet, on the whole, enjoying the ride!

Though I go along trembling, like a leaf driven by a strong wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

That verse from the pagan scriptures which Father used to like comes to me differently lately. I should put it like this:

Though I am a leaf driven by a strong wind, I bless Thee, Almighty, I bless Thee!

To-day I am quivering between happiness and pain, diving from the skies to the sod and up again — for Dana has touched the piano; it is the first time.

We have had a hard day with him, for it was impossible for him to go out, and Eliot is off duty on an experiment — Dana pleaded so. The doctor waded over in the blizzard to see him early this morning; no horse could live in the drifts. Robert sat with his patient a long time, and left me with the day's orders, and would come again.

"Give up everything else," he said. "Devote yourself utterly. Days like this are traps. Watch him, but do not seem to. Repeat the dose, but not till four o'clock. Lock everything carefully. Run no chances."

Dana has been very restless all day. At two he asked me timidly "if it were not time." At three he asked again. At half-past three he grew suddenly very faint and went a deathly color, and I telephoned, and Robert came, struggling and panting, through the snow. When he came, he sat with his watch in his hand and a finger on Dana's pulse. But he sat till the time appointed, yielding nothing, I am sure, in this piteous battle; nor did my poor boy beg for quarter, not once. They fought it out together, man to man.

"Can't you give us a little music, Mrs. Herwin?" asked the doctor, in a matter-of-fact way. But the interrogation was a command. I went to the piano and played for a while, blundering along with old things of Schubert and Schumann that Dana and I used to like, but stupidly enough; and I do not sing. After a time I stopped and went into the library. Dana was there reading quietly, and Marion and Job were playing about his feet. Robert had gone. Dana's eyes had their varnished look — but, ah,

so much less of it, and softer; it is no longer painful. I went to him, and he clung to my hand a little. Then I sat down and began to mend a tear in the flounce of Dombey's second wife; and while I was sewing quietly, suddenly the long-silent power of his hand upon the piano-keys smote every nerve in my body. Then his shaken voice uprose:

> Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
> Home-keeping hearts are happiest.
> For those that wander they know not where
> Are full of trouble and full of care—
> To stay at home is best.

Then his hand fell with a crash upon the ivory. I ran, and held his face against my breast, and bowed my own upon his hair, and said to him—I don't know what; and I kissed him in a way he used to like. Then he whirled upon the piano-stool, and caught me and crushed me to his heart.

"You 're the sweetest woman in the world!" he said. "I never did deserve you, Marna; and now—"

Then I said:

"I always loved you, Dana; but now I honor you. It is a manly fight, and you battle like a man."

"It was n't a manly fall," he quivered pitifully. "I had n't any good excuse — no terrible suffering, as some have. I thought I could stop any time. But, before God, Marna, nobody knows! Nobody *can*."

"My poor boy!" I sobbed. "My poor, poor boy!"

I do not cry in these days — never for Dana to see me. I think this was the first time, and I was ashamed and terrified at what I had done. But it did not seem to harm him any; I think it even did him good. He looked at me with such a look as I would have died for joy to see upon his face once, in that time before he went away.

"If it had n't been for you, my girl —" he faltered. He whirled and struck the piano with a few resounding chords. "When I get well, Marna, I will make it up to you," he said. He played and sang no more; but we passed a gentle evening, and he went quietly to bed.

I don't think I ever knew real, live happiness before — not growing happiness, with roots. "The madness has gone, but the dearness remains."

April the fifth.

To-day we were driving alone, and the soft air had wings. Dana seemed to be lifted upon

them to some lonely upper ether where I could not follow him. There is no solitude, I believe, after all, like that of the soldier in a profound moral struggle; it is more separate than that of any mere misery. Dana looked exalted and remote. Lately he has made great advances and gains upon himself in the process of his cure. These have weakened his physical but intensified his moral vitality. He said abruptly:

"You see, I thought if I went away I could get rid of it. I did n't want to have anybody know — I felt ashamed. There was one time I thought if you knew, I should dislike you. I could n't tell how you would take it — a man can't bear to be lectured. If I had only known! Marna, you have been a lovely girl. You 're too good 'for the likes of me.'" He tried to laugh it off, but his lip trembled.

"I thought the voyage would do something; but it made everything worse. When I got to California — a man would n't ever need naturalization papers in hell, not after that." . . .

. . . "Thought I had deserted you, Marna? Well, I had, I suppose. I could n't come home — like that. I thought I should drop out of sight, die of an overdose some night, and be out of everybody's way, It put itself to me in that light. I used to say: 'You 're a disgraceful

wreck. You 'd only shame her. Perish, and rid her of you. It 's the only manly thing left for you to do.' Three or four times I mixed the overdose, and lay down to take it and die; and I had a letter that I kept ready for you when everything was over. Then I would see that little quiver of your chin —"

"Where is that letter, Dear?" I asked.

"I gave it to the doctor," he said. "He did n't want me to have it around. I asked him to burn it. If it had n't been for Hazelton, Marna — Say, Marna, have you any idea what that fellow has done for me?"

He checked the horse, and we turned toward home. Dana drove rapidly and in silence. When we came in sight of the hospital we met the doctor, driving too. He had the paralytic patient in the buggy, and no speech or language could tell the transfiguration of the poor thing's face. But Robert looked worn.

"Marna," said Dana, abruptly, "I wonder you never fell in love with him. I should n't have blamed you."

I slid my hand into my husband's, and his closed upon my wrist.

May the twenty-second.

It is a week to-night since it happened, and I am writing (as I do) because nothing else will rest me.

Dana went to bed as usual, and no one thought

of any trouble or any danger. He had been so much better, and Eliot has not been required to stay for quite a while. Dana and I have fought it out alone — I giving the diminished dose, by the doctor's orders; it had grown quite small. About two weeks ago my poor boy asked Robert's permission to handle the dose himself. "Don't you think I am fit to be trusted now?" he asked abruptly. So Robert trusted him. And everything went well, for the quantity was carefully prescribed and watched, and it lessened regularly and rapidly, day by day. The doctor says that he has never seen any person show the pluck and determination that Dana has shown in ridding himself of his affliction.

"It is a manly record," Robert said. "Mr. Herwin has won my unqualified respect."

I had begun to feel very proud of Dana.

On this evening that I refer to (it was Sunday evening) Dana had been playing a little, and he tried to sing the "Bedouin Love-Song"; but he could not do it, for it seemed to move him too much, and emotion saps his strength. He began:

From the Desert I come to thee —

but stopped abruptly and left the room.

He called me presently, saying that he thought he would go to bed; and I went up to help him

in the little ways he likes, and kissed him good night, and went to Marion, for she cried for me. Then I locked the front door, and Job came up with me, and trotted into Dana's room at once. Job has slept on his master's bed every night since Dana came home. Dana was sleeping quietly, so I went to bed, the doors being open between our rooms, and the compass-candle burning on Dana's table.

Once or twice in the night I crept in to make sure that all was well, and once he kissed me and said I was a dear, sweet girl; but I slept betweenwhiles, feeling quite at ease about him, and I was asleep when Job came into my room. I think the dog had tried to wake me without at first succeeding, for he was pulling hard at my hand with his thin old paws when I became aware of him. I understood at once, and I sprang. Job never cries "Wolf!" and he is wiser than most people.

"Is Master sick, Job?" I cried; but I ran.

The compass-candle was burning brightly; and when it showed me Dana's face, I gave such a cry that Ellen rushed from the nursery, and the house was aroused in a moment. I managed to articulate, "The telephone! the doctor!" while I lifted my dear boy to the air and did what I could for him. This was little enough,

for he could take no stimulants, and he seemed to me to be dying in my arms. I had nothing to offer him but love and air — the two elements on which human life depends. Some one had flung up the window, and I held him to my heart and whispered to him:

"Live, Dana, live! I love you, Dana. Oh, try to live!"

I was babbling in this way, like a bride, when I looked up and saw the doctor's startled face. It was now half-past two o'clock, the fatal hour "between the night and dawning" when mortal strength is at its lowest, the dead-line of imperiled life.

From then till seven o'clock we fought for Dana — science and love, the doctor and I. To my fading hour I shall see Robert as he looked that night. Beyond a few curt professional orders he did not speak. His jaws shut like steel locks. His gentle eyes grew terrible, and challenged death. Again and again my dear boy sank away from us, and once the pulse stopped altogether; but the doctor called my husband's spirit back.

I could feel that a flicker of the judgment, a blur upon the heart, any error or failure in the man, would have cost everything. Dana's life lay in Robert's hand as utterly as if it had been

a little jewel put there for safe-keeping, and blown through sheltering fingers by a whirlwind.

Afterward, when it was over, I lifted my eyes to the doctor's face. Dana's had been no whiter in all those hours.

"I suppose it was an overdose?" I breathed. "He took too much?"

"There was no dose at all," said Robert. "Mr. Herwin has taken no morphine for twenty-four hours."

He held up the vial with the thick white liquid, and showed me the ebb-line.

"I could not understand why you repeated the dose," I whispered. "It terrified me to see you do it."

The doctor made no comment then, except to say that he would send Eliot over at once. But the next day Robert talked with me a little about what had happened. He told me that a man who could do what Dana had done had in him that which physicians call the vital essence; Dana had shown that he possessed the moral basis for physical renewal. "I am now ready to tell you that your husband is capable of cure," the doctor said. "He will recover, by God's grace."

"And yours," I tried to say. But the words

refused me. They seemed like beggars in a palace.

June the sixteenth.

MINNIE CURTIS came over to-day. She brought Dana's violin; for it seems she has kept it all this while. Dana thanked her indifferently. She asked him to play a duet, but he said he did not feel well enough, and added that he was out of practice. She took up the "Bedouin Love-Song," and drummed the prelude. Dana looked annoyed and left the room. When Minnie started to go it was dusk, and I asked Dana if he did not feel like walking home with her.

"Certainly," he said; "put your hat on, Marna."

So Dana and Job and I escorted Minnie home. On the way back I asked him:

"Did she write to you while you were in Uruguay?"

"Oh, bother Minnie Curtis!" cried my husband.

When we had got home we sat down in the tree-house for a while, and the scent of the June lilies was so strong that it made Dana faint. But the breath of the climbing roses was so delicate and so joyous that I could have wept with comfort.

"Duets are well enough in their places," said

Dana, comfortably; "but when it comes to real life and — trouble — there 's nothing for a man like an unselfish wife. . . . Marna, you 're a lovely girl!"

We sat in the tree-house with clasped hands. Something dearer than betrothal, finer than our bridal, drew us together. Dana's worn face held an expression which touched me indescribably. But the faintness increased upon him, and I had to get him into the house. The sad thing about Dana's convalescent strength is that it deserts him so abruptly, at unexpected moments and for unthought-of causes. Yet he is gaining sturdily. I am very happy.

Robert thinks I am overdoing — but I am quite happy. Dana begins to show more interest in Marion than he did. At first it was only of me that he seemed to think. He sits in the air and sun for hours, with Marion and Job laughing and barking about him. Lately he has begun to read; I often find him with his law-books. Mr. J. Harold Mellenway has been out to see him. Next week Dana is to be allowed to go to town alone; the doctor has given this permission. All that varnished look has gone from Dana's eyes; they do not regain their old insouciance, and the bright insolence is beaten out of my poor boy's beauty;

but I am watching for the debonair in him that I loved so. Will it never revisit him? Or me?

"You expect the miracles," said Robert, once, when I spoke of this.

"Because you work them," I replied.

Robert's eyes filled; they do not often. He said:

"The miracle may be in a man's own heart."

"Or in a woman's," I answered him. Yet afterward I was not quite sure that I understood the purport of his words; nor, perhaps, of my own. But I had the consciousness, so frequent with me, that Robert understood everything, and that it did not matter whether I did or not.

Wednesday evening.

So it was not *Dana*, and it was not *Man*. I am spared that great dilemma. And all the scenery has changed joyously, and the house, though serried of women, seems to cry out upon me no more, but only to lift to me gently murmuring eyes. There is a soft, pleased look in the eyes of contented women, not unlike that in the eyes of kindly treated animals. I wonder if I have it myself; "for my race is of the Asra."

Are womanhood and manhood set at civil war? Then so are soul and body. There is a

sketch of William Blake's. Death, the Divider, has divorced this elemental marriage, sundered the bliss of the spirit and the flesh. It is the Resurrection Day. Out of the grave clambers the body — a man in the glory of his youth and vigor. Down from the ether sweeps the soul — a woman fair and swift and tender. Anything finer than the rapture on whose wings these twain rush together I never saw expressed by any art of pencil or of pen. It is one of the embraces that imagination dares, but on whose mystery and ecstasy hope does not intrude.

The Dowe Cottage, August the twelfth.

We have been here ten days, and are to stay the month out, by the doctor's orders. We both needed it, he said. Dana has gained blessedly since we came, and is now thought to be quite in condition to go back to his law office in the fall. Mr. Mellenway comes over from his place (he is a neighbor this summer), now and then, to see Dana, and they talk about it. It is inexpressibly touching to see how happy my poor boy is in the prospect of doing a man's work again. In fact, we are so light-hearted that I do not feel as if it could last. One never again quite trusts human happiness, I find, after one has experienced great misery.

We are all children playing on the sea-shore together — Marion and Job and Ellen and Luella; but I think Dana and I are the biggest children of all. We spend hours of every day upon the sand, not reading, not talking, leaning on that silence which is more than reverie but less than thought. Mercibel came out and took Sunday with us. She said:

"Joy has her elect, as well as sorrow."

Mercibel has her vacation just now, and she and her children are in our house at home for the month that we are here. It is a delight to see the happiness this gives. The doctor comes out once a week. We miss the doctor — sometimes Dana more than I, sometimes I more than Dana; we strike a fair average, I think. He is expected next Saturday.

August the seventeenth.

YESTERDAY I had a shock and fright. It came to be dark, and I could not find Dana anywhere. He had seemed very quiet and well all day, and we had been together a good deal; but fearing to sate him with tenderness,— for the happiest wife should reserve herself, I am beginning to believe,— I went up to put Marion to bed, and lingered, leaving her father alone on the piazza. He was watching for Robert, who was delayed,

and had telegraphed us not to expect him until we should see him.

When I got down-stairs Dana was gone, and Job. It was then quite black, for the clouds were piling for a shower, and the sea was thundering. I ran down to the rocks and the little beach. The surf was throwing up its hands, and seemed to me — for I was excited and startled — to wring them. A flash of lightning revealed the fretted outlines of the weir and the fishermen's dories. In one of these I saw the figure of a man. He was rowing, and the boat was turning out. Clinging to the stern seat sat a little patient, watchful dog. I threw the whole force of my soul and body into my voice, and my "*Dana!*" might have called a spirit from the grave, I thought. But he did not hear me, being absorbed in God knows what abyss.

"Job! Job!" I cried. "Oh, *Job!* Tell *Master!*"

Job's bark came instantly to me — excited and anxious, the high bark of aroused canine responsibility. There was lightning again, and I saw that the little dog had crawled over in the rocking boat and put his arms about his master's neck. But now it was thundering, and no voice could carry, either mine or Job's. While I stood distressed and uncertain in the dark,— for it

did not lighten any more, and the shower babbled away foolishly,— suddenly the keel grated under my very feet. Job sprang into the surf, and dashed himself, drenched and ecstatic, upon me. Dana slowly tied the painter to the hauling-line, and drew the dory out, hand over hand.

"Frightened, Marna?" he said.

I went down quietly, and helped him haul the dory off. I did not speak.

"I 'm all right," he muttered; "I was only — hard put to it, that 's all."

We pulled on the hauling-line together till the dory was out, and then we came up the rocks, silently. Dana did not take my outstretched hand, and I perceived that his plight was too sore for sympathy. A wife has learned half the lesson of life, I think, if she has learned when (and when not) to leave a man to fight his direst battles without her.

Half-way up to the house we met the doctor. Dana uttered a piteous exclamation:

"Hazelton! I thought you were n't coming! I swore I would n't send for you," he added.

"I did my best," sighed Robert. "I have some pretty sick people at home."

He fell into step with his patient. I slid away and left the two men alone. The doctor remained with Dana all the night.

In the morning Robert and I found a few moments apart.

"Is it always going to be like this?" I asked at once.

"Possibly."

"Has he got to fight so — to the end?"

"Probably — at times."

"Was he in danger?"

"Yes."

"Yet you count upon a sound recovery?"

"I count upon recovery because he fights."

"It is so hard for him!" I said. "And so splendid in him!"

"I respect your husband, Marna"— Robert drew a hard, slow breath — "as much as any patient I ever had in my life, and I want you to know it. Doctors don't always, you know — they see so much moral weakness; it wears on them. I wish you to understand that, from my point of view, you have reason to be very proud of Mr. Herwin."

"Robert," I demanded, "tell me the utter truth. How long can he fight like this? It seems to me as if his body weakened while his soul strengthens. I must know what is before me. Will my husband live — for many years?"

"By God's grace," said Robert, using the solemn words that he had used before.

"You do not tell me all you think!" I cried.

"Be Love incarnate to him, Marna," evaded Robert, gently. "Give him all its price. All a man's chance lies in the heart of his wife. And yours," he added, "*yours*—" The doctor did not finish his sentence, and we talked no more; for Dana, with the havoc on his happy face, came up and joined us.

September the nineteenth.

To-morrow is our wedding-day, and I have a surprise for Dana. My poor boy has never spoken to me of his missing marriage-ring; nor I of it to him. But I can see him sometimes looking wistfully at his bare left hand; and last night he kissed my rings, both of them, the ruby and the gold, in a way that went to my heart, but he said nothing at all. Dana has grown so kind, so gentle, that it frightens me. That terrible irritability of his is melting away from him. Sometimes I wish I could see more of it, and there are moments when I think if he were a little cruel, as he used to be, I should feel happier about him. When he swears, or is downright cross, my spirits are quite good. It is not natural for Dana to be patient, and it troubles me to see him unnaturally considerate. Character has its price, as well as love; and it seems to me

as if he paid the cost of his in the treasury of his life.

I have got a wedding-ring for Dana.

September the twenty-first.

How natural is joy, my heart!
How easy after sorrow!

We had a dear day. It was bride's weather without and within. Dana got up very early, for he was restless and sleepless, and began to decorate the cottage with pearl-white roses and ferns — the fine ones, no large fronds.

"You shall be a bride again, Marna," he said. "I have no other present for you, Dear. I looked at a lot of — little things; but nothing suited me."

We were smothered in flowers. Everybody sent something — the Grays, the Mellenways, Mercibel, and a few old friends in town who knew; the neighbors, the servants, Minnie Curtis and the old doctor, the staff from the hospital, and two or three of the patients. The paralytic produced hydrangeas and a Bible text. But the old lady distinguished by fits offered a wreath of immortelles (as if we had been a funeral), and wrote upon her card: "I have n't had one for six weeks."

Marion was quite well (having had one of her

throats the day before). I put her in the old May-flower muslin that I have made over for her, and Job wore a white necktie. Marion had varnished the doll's house for the occasion, and the effect was heightened by the fact that she had performed this work of art with the mucilage-brush, which she had dipped into the ink-bottle in the process. Dombey was induced to ride to the festivities in an automobile; but Dombey's second wife followed at a deferential distance, dragging a baby-carriage with twins. Poor Banny Doodle was conspicuously absent, having at last met a final fate in the clothes-wringer; she is temporarily interred at the foot of the tree-house. Invitations to a ceremonious funeral are to be out, it is understood, next week. Marion develops a quaint quality, and something like imagination. She begins to be old enough to interest her father. He does not like too new a baby. When she was born he asked if she were Maltese.

The doctor did not come over yesterday at all; nor did he send us any flowers or message with the others. I could not deny to myself that I should have felt happier through the day if he had. It is a strange matter that love, which exiles friendship at the first, may recall it at the last; yes, and love the truer and be the

gladder for it. At least, that is the road of my experience. I wonder if it is a forest path, unbeaten though not untrodden? I think of that old question that I used to ask myself about Man and Dana. To me, beyond the lot of women, has been given faith in a fair and noble friendship. Is it Man? Or is it Robert?

Just as the sun sank, James came over with something under his arm, and the doctor's love. Dana untied the package excitedly,—he was as happy about everything as if he had been a boy at a birthday party,—and we thought it was a picture. But it was not a picture: it was a prayer. There was a deep frame of bright gold, and a panel of dulled gold, and the letters flickered from it like little flames of crimson and of white. The words were eight, and they prayed the Prayer of Tobit in the Apocrypha:

MERCIFULLY ORDAIN
THAT WE MAY BECOME AGED
TOGETHER

Dana's eyes filled. Neither of us spoke. We took the prayer up-stairs, and hung it in my husband's room.

"*What follows is to the Music Varadi and the Mode Rupaka.*" So it ran in the Indian Song of Songs, when Radha, forgiving Krishna, took him to her heart, and they were married.

What follows is in the mode solitary, and to the music of love and of repentance. For I have now come to a page in my record which my husband will not see, and through it I draw the dele-sign of my separate soul. The happiest marriage may have these erasures in shared experience, and perhaps finish the great, completed sentence of life not the less comfortably for that. I do not deceive myself. I do not suppose that Dana and I have had the happiest marriage. But the end is not yet. And if we have saved our sacred opportunity, where may it lead us? The salvation of an imperiled peace has I do not know what of exquisite privilege. We seem to be all the while expecting the unknown, the untried, as we did when we were betrothed, as we did when newly wedded. Still we have the elusive to overtake; even yet the eidolon flies before us. There is an Indian summer of married life. In that deep and purple atmosphere, sun-smitten, warmed to the heart, will April seem a pale affair? I cannot tell. "There is burning haze on all the hills. My eyes are dim. I can see but a very little way."

Now one thought has troubled me for this many a week; and on my wedding-day it took definite thorn-shape and hid in my bride-roses.

As it grew to be dusk, a question which I have often considered presented itself to me in such a way that I could parry it no longer, and I decided suddenly, and for myself, that I would write to my husband the note which I append. I decided this without consulting the doctor, and risking something of the effect on Dana of what I meant to do; but it is as true that there are times when no risks can come between the souls of wife and husband as it is that there can be no third estate in marriage. So I wrote the note, and slipped it into his hand, and evaded him, and left him to read it.

"*Our Wedding-day; twilight.*

"DANA MY DARLING: Before we were married and since — and while you were away — I have kept a secret from you. I cannot be happy to keep it any longer. All this while, Dana, I have written something that you have never seen. It is rather long, and it will pain you sometimes; and it will tell you — perhaps it will tell you what you do not know, perhaps not: I cannot say. You may feel that you have something to forgive me; for I, too, have had

my holy war, and if I have come out of it unwounded, that is owing not so much to any superior quality in me as it is to the loyalty and high nature of one who has fought for us both, and saved us — you from ruin and death, and me from misery or from mistake.

"I have a wedding-present for you, Dear — a little one; but before I give it to you I feel that I must show you all my heart; for I must be honest with you to my uttermost — you know you used to say that was my weakness. This writing that I speak of holds me. I keep back no part of the price. Will you take it — the Book of the Heart of the Wife?

"It is like your ruby on my finger, blazing deep to the core, if you look at it in the right light (and all the crimson fires are yours, my dear); but if you were to look at it in the wrong way — I dare not think of it! I will not!

"Give me no time to think, Dana, lest my courage fail me, but answer me at once.

"Your trembling

"MARNA, Wife."

Now when Dana had read this note, such a startled spark flickered in his tired, happy eyes that I was terrified, lest what I had done was a mistake and would harm him; and I should, I

think, have repented and compromised, and withheld the Book of the Heart from my husband, after all, or until another day. But he strode into my room where I sat quaking, and imperiously commanded me, and I found myself but a reed before the wind of his aroused will, as I used to be when we first loved each other.

"I must have the book," he said. "Don't be afraid. Give it to me." So I gave him the book — saving only this which I am writing now, and that one page where it was written in the Dowe Cottage that the doctor evaded one of my questions about Dana if the battle with his affliction continued so sore and so exhausting.

I gave him the book, and he went away into his own room, and locked his door, and read. I went into my room, and got out of my wedding-dress and into my ruby gown,— the dear old faded thing! — and threw up the window, lest I suffocate with the beating of my heart; and I took down my hair and braided it for the night, and lay down on my bed, and said to myself:

"I have committed the worst mistake of my life. In my obstinate impulse to be honest — just to set my own soul at ease — I have run the risk of estranging Dana forever. And this foolish manuscript may make him ill; it might

even be very dangerous for him. . . . What have I done?"

Two whirling hours spun between us, and he made no sign. All the rooms were still. The child was asleep; the servants were gone out: Dana and I were alone in the house. The air seemed to have absorbed the scent of the souls of all the bridal flowers — hundreds of them — in our rooms, and in the silent spaces of the house down-stairs. Job was wandering about the house, neglected and forlorn. He crept in on tiptoe, as if he knew that he ought not to intrude. When he found me alone, he sprang and kissed me rapturously, and put his poor old paws about my neck, and I said aloud:

"You 've stood by me through it all, Job!"

That trifling, commonplace thing and the sound of my own voice somehow steadied me. I got up and took Job into the nursery, and put him to bed in his basket by Marion's crib, and kissed them both, the child and the dog, and came back into my own room.

When I had done so, I found that Dana was there. He had brought the compass-candle and set it down upon the table. Beside the candle lay the Book of the Heart, a mass of crushed and crumpled manuscript, scattered anyhow. Dana was very pale. His face was, in

fact, so rigid and unsmiling that I shrank from him, and slipped back into a dark corner of the hall. I do not think he saw me, for he strode by with ringing feet, and down the stairs, and out of the front door.

I came to my senses at that, and ran down after him, calling: "Dana! Dana *dear!*" But he did not hear me, or he did not answer, and melted into the darkness while I spoke. Such a consciousness of what this might mean surged within me that I could have shrieked for help; but I restrained myself, and only followed him quietly, catching up my white cape to cover me as I flew by the sofa in the hall.

He walked rapidly, but I ran, and so I came within sight of him half-way between the tree-house and the avenue. I did not cry out to him, or in any way make my presence known, for the power to do so had gone out in me, like the bubbling of a drowning voice under water. When I saw that he had his face set toward the hospital I followed no farther, but crushed myself into the spiræa-bushes where it was darkest, and so stood, shaking. Dana went on to the hospital, and up the steps, and in. After a little hesitation, I ran back to the house, and to the telephone. Mercibel answered the call-bell.

"Is he with the doctor?" I panted.

"Yes."

"Manage to get a message. Tell the doctor not to lose sight of him, for God's sake!"

"Don't disturb yourself," said Mercibel. "It is quite unnecessary."

Dizzy both with my fright and with my fear, I staggered out into the air again, and got as far as the tree-house. There I stopped, and sat, quaking and cold. It seemed to me as if my own nature stood aloof and looked at me critically, and took sides against me, and stripped me comfortless, and I argued with my nature.

"Happiness was in your arms," I said, "and you opened them and let it drop; that 's all. Probably there are plenty of people just as honest as you are who don't make so much fuss about it. It takes this to teach you that reserve may be just as right and honorable as expression, and sometimes more necessary. . . . Dana will never forgive you, never. He has read it all, and gone straight to the doctor with it. Probably Robert will never forgive you, either. You have lost them both."

While I sat there, stabbing myself with these poniards, footsteps crackled on the gravel walk, and I got out of the tree-house and fled before them, wrapping my long white cloak about me as I ran, drawing the girdle of my shabby gown,

and fastening the lace somehow at the throat, for I was not dressed to be seen. In my distress and hurry I stumbled on the piazza steps and fell, and I heard a low, disturbed exclamation from the doctor; but it was my husband who ran and lifted me. As he did so his arm went about me, and I leaned upon it, for I could not stand, I trembled so.

"Don't be a goose *now*, Marna," said Dana. "You 've been magnificent too long!"

He tried to laugh in his old, boyish way, but he could not do it. His face was very white; it had his beautiful look.

"Here, Marna," he said, "is the best man I ever knew in my life. I 've been over to tell him so."

Before I knew what my husband meant to do, he had fallen on his knees before the doctor, and had drawn me with him.

"Bless us, old fellow," said Dana. "We — we need it. There is n't any saint or minister I 'd ask it of but you. It 's a kind of a — second ceremony, don't you see? My wife and I —"

But Dana choked. I think that Robert's hands trembled for a moment upon our bowed heads. I think he said:

"The Lord bless you, and keep you, . . . and give you peace."

But when I raised my raining eyes my husband and I were alone upon the dark piazza. Dana led me into the house, and shut the door, and locked it; then drew me up the stairs and into our own rooms. And when the doors of these were shut, he held out both his arms; so I ran to them, and they closed about me.

"You 're a lovely girl!" said Dana. "I never half deserved you, Marna. . . . I never shall. Have I been too sure you would forgive me, dear? . . . Say, Marna, after all that — are you sure you want *me?*"

Then I took out the ring that I had worn all day on a chain against my heart, till I could gather my courage to show it to Dana — the wedding-ring, all warm as it was. I put it to my lips before I put it on his finger. Then I laid my cheek upon his hand. But when I raised my face, I heard him say, as he had said it in my dream: "*This is the kiss that lives.*"

We sat on in the dim room; it was rose-scented and still. Dana got into the easy-chair, and took me in his lap.

"I am too heavy," I said; "you are too tired to hold me, Dear."

But Dana laughed.

"Why, you 've got on that dear old gown!"

he said. He took a piece of the faded velvet and lifted it slowly to his lips.

September the twenty-second.

DANA has been worse for all the excitement, as I feared. He kept up joyously until yesterday afternoon, when he suffered one of his sudden reactions, and we sent for the doctor quickly. He was not in, so I had to do the best I could for my dear boy alone. As it happened, I made out pretty well, and he did not sink, as he used to do, but only grew faint, and then stronger, and faint again; but in the end he rallied grandly. I have not felt so encouraged about Dana at any time.

When I was reading a novel to him afterward, to divert him from his suffering, suddenly he interrupted me:

"Put it down, Marna. It seems dull after the Book of the Heart. Real things are the only interesting ones, are n't they? That was n't much of a fellow, that hero. Say, Marna, there 's one thing I want you to understand. You don't know men, and I do. I tell you, Hazelton is no common sort. He is like a fellow seen in a mist — taller than the rest of us; yet when you come up to him he is just as real, a man all the same — God bless him anyhow!"

When it came to be evening, Dana asked for the doctor.

"I have n't seen him for two days!" he complained.

The telephone was out of order, and Ellen was putting Marion to bed, so I caught up my white cape and slipped out and over to call Robert myself.

I ran up the steps of my father's old home, and into the office of the hospital. No one was there, and I sat down in Robert's chair to wait for him. His desk was brightly lighted, and an open book lay upon it — not a medical book, plainly. I picked it up (I felt sure he would not mind) and glanced at it. It was in French. I translate from memory, and negligently enough, for I read too quickly to recall the French:

"Yet I love her."

"But she does not love you."

"Yet I adore her."

"But she will never come to meet you beneath the tree."

"Yet I am waiting for her." . . .

My eyes ran down the page and stayed at this, against which Robert's pencil had slid and paused:

"*But with what do you appease your hunger?*"

"*I know not,*" *said the youth.* "*It may be that I*

have now and then gathered mulberries from the nearest hedge."

"*And with what do you quench your thirst?*"

"*That, too, I know not,*" *replied the youth.* "*Perchance I have sometimes stooped over the brook which flows hard by.*"

As I sat with the book on my lap, Robert came in. At first I did not speak; I could not. For I felt that the Book of his Heart lay open before me, and he felt that I felt it, and there was nothing to be said.

"My husband sent me —" I faltered.

"I will go at once," replied the doctor, quietly. He put on his hat and drew my falling cape over my shoulders, and we started out.

He asked me one or two professional questions naturally enough, and I answered them in the same way. We crossed the hospital grounds, and the lawn, and came up to the tree-house.

When we reached the tree-house, suddenly the night seemed to quiver and to be smitten through and through with reeling music; for Dana, with the restlessness of his nature and of his convalescence, had come to the piano and begun to sing — the dearest, the longest silent of his songs:

From the Desert I come to thee,
On my Arab shod with fire.

. . . . .

I love thee, I love but thee!
With a love that shall not die!
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

"Go to him," said Robert, in a low voice. "I will wait till he has finished singing. Then I shall follow you."

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